Stack
Annex
5
071
928

THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES
THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES THE LIBRARY OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES THE LIBRARY OF
THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES
THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES
THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES THE LIBRARY OF

THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES

THE WOMAN OF THE HILL

SAVILE
LUMLEY

The Woman of the Hill

By

"UNE CIRCASSIENE"

Authoress of
"Romance of a Harem"

TRANSLATED BY

C. FORESTIER-WALKER

With a frontispiece in half-tone

NEW YORK

BRENTANO'S

Stack
Annex
5
0
9

THE WOMAN OF THE HILL

CHAPTER I

On the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, near the village of Anatolou-Hissar, the immense villa of Cheik-ul-Islam was falling slowly into ruins. For nearly a century its dazzling whiteness had been reflected in the blue waters; and one brilliant sunny day, quite suddenly, the white marble quay at the villa's base sank and crumbled, leaving in the waters a large white stain.

In the vast rooms of wonderful proportions and pure lines the heavy autumn rains dripped through the delicately-painted

ceilings, leaving grey stains on the delicate rose-coloured grounds, where a simple-minded artist had painted, with the calm assurance of his trade, wonderful trees and improbable birds.

Above the villa, like a giant's staircase, were the hanging gardens, climbing in endless terraces to the summit of the green hill.

Sometimes, quite suddenly, one of these walls would collapse, crumbling noisily, and rolling down, echoing like a storm among the hills. For a moment the family and slaves of the Cheik-ul-Islam, seized with an instinctive dread of the future, would listen attentively to the dull menacing sound, then the carelessness and habitual resignation of the Turkish character would calm their terror, and, looking at each other, they would

smilingly say, "As long as we have life, what else matters?"

Indeed it was clear that little else did matter, or at least very little; for all was falling into ruin around them, whilst no one thought of giving the necessary orders for reparations, which would preserve so splendid a domain.

What was the use of interfering in the fatal order of things?

CHAPTER II

When one was admitted for the first time into the presence of the Cheik-ul-Islam, chief of the Musulman religion, one was struck dumb by his magnificent and stately appearance, which reminded one so strongly of what one had read of those, described in the sacred books.

The pure whiteness of his turban, beard and garments made so harmonious a whole that it filled with respect the hearts of the poor and unhappy people who came to receive his charities.

They kissed his hands fervently, holding

them long to their lips, and looking on him with a sort of religious veneration; they understood how full of goodness was his gentle heart and the pure kindness that shone in his fine eyes.

They knew how really great was his tenderness for all sufferers, whilst his own life had always been, and remained, pure as one of the flowers on the sacred hills; and that in the soft dusk, when the hour was neither of day or night, he prayed for them, calling on God to look tenderly on their sufferings. Having lost his wife after the birth of his daughter Adilé, Cheik-ul-Islam begged his sister Adevie-hanem-effendi to come and live with him; she being a widow and poor, had till that time lived quietly at Damascus.

Without a moment's hesitation, at his

first summons she started with her daughter Éminé, and a slave, by name Aliée, reaching his house one morning as the roses were shedding their petals at the first breath of Autumn.

She kissed his hand humbly, as is the custom, and having had her rooms pointed out to her, undid her various parcels and established herself for good and all in the villa Anatolou-Hissar. She set courageously to work to manage her brother's house, which seemed to her to be given up to the most complete disorder.

Notwithstanding all her efforts to make him help her, and take some interest in the remarkable accounts which the steward of the *Selamléc*[1] brought to her, she quickly saw that, apart from her brother's duties as chief

[1] The part of the house reserved to the men.

of religion, he was incapable of occupying himself in any way with the most ordinary details of life, or of grasping how ruinous was the system of the steward.

He listened kindly and gently to all she said, and seemed to be profoundly surprised at discovering such disagreeable things, but would not admit that the man could be dishonest.

He said a few encouraging and kindly words to his sister, evidently inspired by the serenity of his pure, great soul. They had only the effect of making her leave his presence in an irritated frame of mind, and murmuring rather more loudly than civilly, "I don't understand a word of what you are saying, my august brother, but the words of saints evidently are most powerful as long as they are incomprehensible. God be praised."

Then, stricken with remorse, she retraced her steps, and having respectfully kissed his hand, betook herself to her own room, round three sides of which the sea sighed and beat day and night, sometimes softly, sometimes loudly, as if furious. There, sitting immovable on the low Turkish sofa, with her eyes fixed dreamily on the sea, she put her cigarette down on a ledge of one of the many windows, and turning towards the palace of the Sultan, she prayed softly, calling the blessings of God on him and Cheik-ul-Islam.

And by doing that, gradually in her heart she felt, with a vague feeling of consolation, that at least as long as there was a Sultan and a Cheik-ul-Islam the earth would still tremble with joy.

Later, in the gathering dusk, when night

unfolded its wings, the ruins that lay round seemed to stand out the more distinctly, like monstrous skeletons awaiting burial, and again her mind became uncertain and burdened with vague distress.

She thought with horror of the wave of European morals and customs that was sweeping over her country, even to the doors of the house that she governed, and the ill-concealed leanings of her niece Adilé, who wished openly for emancipation and free life with an unveiled face.

"Evidently," she said, half aloud, "the devil himself is in the air"; and seized with a sudden panic, she hid her face in her hands.

As is invariably the custom when women are gifted with intelligence and energy, they gain considerable influence over their

immediate surroundings, and the Hanem-effendi was therefore consulted about all the affairs of the harem, the Selamléc, and the village of Anatolou-Hissar. Nothing was settled without her advice, and naturally cares of all sorts passed over her disturbed mind, bringing anxiety and unrest.

Amongst others, a strange event took place that gave her much food for thought. The preceding day, hidden behind a curtain at the doorway which was used for passing the provisions from the Selamléc into the harem, beneath a large spreading arbutus tree, she listened to the steward, who praised the virtue of living on vegetables, instead of meat, which the butcher refused to give without being paid for. When quite suddenly he stopped, and with a great air

of outraged modesty, and trembling voice, he said, "If you will allow me, Effendim, there is also another question that I wish to submit to your Excellency. A courtesan has arrived on your property, and sings aloud of her charms on the hill. I am ashamed to have to confess to you that the servants of the Selamléc go up there in the evening, and even put sprigs of orange blossom in their hair to please her."

"It is incredible," said the lady, aghast.

"The Turkish courtesans show themselves so rarely, that I fear some evil thing must be coming to us. I beg you will notice the storks are even uneasy on the roofs where they have their nests. Evidently misfortunes are in the air."

"But why not drive her away?" asked the Hanem-effendi.

"If she has come, it is because she is necessary," answered the wise steward. "She travels from a great distance with the shepherds who come to join the keepers of the property of your Excellencies. I have been told she has already been here before, some years ago, but that then she did not know how to sing. Her face and body are miracles of beauty—she washes herself three times a day and scents herself with the odour of herbs of which she alone has the secret. Ought we not, perhaps, to resign ourselves to fate and let her accomplish her destiny? If we drive her away she will only move to a neighbouring hill. Let us hope that, having arrived with the storks,

she may also go when they leave us in Autumn."

"Inchallah!" sighed the Hanem-effendi, who wished to retire, but the steward, with a discreet cough, added, "That is not all—wait, I pray you. The turban of the priest of our village has been found twice in the same week on the table beside his bed. He is very anxious to consult you on the subject, and is here standing behind me. May he speak to you?"

The Hanem-effendi re-arranged her head-dress, fastened with a pin her veil closer round her throat, hesitated for a moment, and then said, "I am listening."

After the usual flow of compliments, the *hodja* having said several times that he wished to kiss her feet, he seemed so

embarrassed, that to give him encouragement she repeated, "I am listening."

"I followed your advice, Excellency—but—there—I think I must tell you all about it over again, for you must have forgotten. I am, as you know, occupied with the care of the mosque, and the instruction of the village children, whom I teach to read the Koran, and then there are the poor to whom I give *bilaf*. Therefore, perhaps, as you may remember, unintentionally, I forget the duties of a husband towards his wife. As you know, she gets very angry with me, and gossips a great deal with the women round the well, and tells them all sorts of things that a husband does not care to have talked about, which gives the village an undesirable reputation. Well, now,

something has occurred which has given me the nickname of 'Hodja with two Fridays.' For they call me by no other name now."

"There is no great harm in that," said the Hanem-effendi, softly.

"Ah! but there is," he said, sadly; "do you know what my wife has done? Well, acting on your advice, so as to live in peace I said to her, 'My wife, I authorize you every Friday night, when we go to bed, to place my turban on the table near us, which will recall to my memory what I am always forgetting."

Here the *hodja* sniffed, blew his nose, and then cried excitedly, "Since then, do you know what she has done, that woman?—she has found two Fridays in the same week, and it is always twice

a week that my turban is placed there. I said, 'What a strange woman you are, that you always find two Fridays in the same week.' Will your Excellency believe it, she laughed aloud, and with extraordinary boldness, like a European, she said, 'I will soon find three.' Such an answer dumbfounded me. I beg your Excellency to use your great influence to stop this scandal. The good name of the village that I look after depends on it."

"My son," said the Hanem-effendi, with great dignity, "I will guard your good name, and the reputation of the village."

CHAPTER III

Later on she found herself thinking much over all these things, and when in her room, she pushed open the shutter from one of the windows, and looked out on the sea at her feet, which a strong current was driving and swaying with masses of foam.

A sea-bird perched on the ruins of the quay was following with its little black eyes the approach of a caique, and nervously turning its head right and left. Suddenly it opened its blue wings and flew away in the direction of the Black

Sea. The boat having run in to shore, a Greek woman landed, holding a letter in her hand. As she drew nearer to the harem she hid the note under her shawl in a furtive manner, but the Hanem-effendi, who had followed her closely with her eyes, cried out sharply and imperiously, "Come, *cocona*, and give me immediately the letter you are holding in your hand."

The *cocona*, as all Greek women do, immediately began a hasty rigmarole of lies, but, under the fixed stare of the lady, suddenly faltered, and after a little hesitation held out the letter to her.

"Who is it from?" asked Hanem-effendi, severely.

"From Osman Bey," was the faltering answer.

"Go, it is well—and never venture here again."

When she was alone, not knowing how to read French, she turned the letter impatiently in her fingers, then held it to her face, and noticed its heavy scent—the scent that the perfumers in the Rue de la Paix sell to the Beys and Pachas who wish to be thought 'à la franca.'

"It is always that scent which glides in amongst us," she said, half aloud. Vaguely and uneasily, not knowing quite what she ought to do, she sent for her daughter Éminé, and begged her to explain what was written in the letter, and to whom it was directed.

"It is sent to me," said Éminé, simply, but keeping always the respectful attitude that she owed to her mother. "My cousin

and I have for some time been in correspondence with Osman Bey and Noureddin Pacha. We have decided to marry them. What we have learnt from our European teachers shows us that independence and liberty are the most valuable things in life. Look at the English, American, and French women. They are free, and we wish to become like them."

Having accentuated almost brutally the last words, she held up her head haughtily, as if to defend what she called her 'liberty.'

If a chasm had opened between them, the mother could not have looked more astonished. Éminé was tall, well made, and slight, after the manner of young girls, and her golden brown eyes shone brilliantly

like stars, and her curved red lips were like ripe fruit in the sun.

She began proudly again a discourse on the emancipation of women, saying that liberty was the first step towards raising the morals of a nation, and added, "America has given us a striking example in——"

She saw that her mother was no longer listening, and paused.

An immense void seemed to stretch out between their two minds, and with the weary step of a tired traveller, the Hanem-effendi abandoned all hope of mentally following her child. She remained stricken silent — feeling that the mischief was irremediable.

"I am only speaking the truth," insisted Éminé, feeling irritated that she

had not impressed her mother with her show of knowledge.

"You are to blame, my child," said the Hanem-effendi, sadly and slowly; "European ideas do not prevent that—you are to blame. Osman Bey and Noureddin Pacha are atheists; they are no longer Musulmen, except physically. The religion of their souls is dead—killed by their long visits to European capitals. You forget that your uncle is the chief of our religion."

In her turn she ceased speaking suddenly. The violence of her emotion seemed to banish all the strength from her body and ideas from her mind. She could find nothing decisive to say. She got up and took a few hurried steps in the room, almost unconsciously holding her hands tightly pressed to her throbbing

temples, and for a moment she thought she was going to faint. A soft breath of wind passed in through the window from the sea, and the gentleness of its caress brought tears to her eyes. To hide them from her child she turned and looked out on the blue waters of the Bosphorus.

Then loud cries woke her from her state of semi-forgetfulness, and in astonishment she saw a small sailing boat caught by the current and driven swiftly towards the building. Two European sailors sprang into the bows with boat-hooks to try and break the inevitable shock.

With a crash the bowsprit dashed through the trellis-work of the immense window, where the two Turkish women were, and the glass and light woodwork fell in a thousand pieces into the water like the

sound of hail in a violent storm. In a moment four sailors were almost in the room.

In a sort of stupor they gazed at the women, and then, realising that they were almost in a harem, their looks changed from surprise to delight. One, with his hand on heart, waved kisses to Éminé, whilst the others smiled in an impertinent manner. Horror-struck for a moment, Hanem-effendi remained motionless, then rising before them with a superb gesture, she seemed to hurl back on them the foulness of their insult.

From the stern of the boat the captain shouted some order, and the four men hurriedly shoved off, and in a few moments the boat was floating away in the soft rose-coloured light of evening.

"Christianity penetrates with a brutal fury through all the cracks in our houses," cried passionately the elder lady, with such anger in her voice as to make it almost unrecognizable. Then seeing a stain of blood on her white linen mantle, she screamed aloud, forgetting, for the first time in her life, that calmness of voice and manner is the only distinction between the great ones of earth and those that are born slaves.

"Take this horrible stain from me," she cried as the slaves ran in, "throw all this wreckage, stained with the blood of the destroyers of my race, into the sea. Ah! that I could see it dyed with the blood of their hearts. See," she screamed, in a frenzy of anger, "see, miserable animals that you are, you, who never

defend yourselves, Christianity has passed in here—what is left? Nothing. All is finished, all is broken!"

The sight of the blood from a sailor wounded by the broken glass seemed to drive her almost mad, and knowing no way of revenge, she burst into a passion of tears and sobs before her slaves, who in all their lives had never seen her cry.

The poor girls, filled with terror, remained motionless, trying to look humble and submissive.

When she became calmer, she stifled her sobs, but her eyes followed the distant boat, growing fainter and more vague in the soft fading light, its white sails gradually melting away into the distant primrose and mauve clouds, where one star hung like a pale lamp.

She passed her hands over her eyes as if to efface the memory of what had seemed to her a long and terrible nightmare, and uttering a short prayer, walked towards the apartments of her brother.

Silently, as is the custom, she waited for him to speak first. He closed the Koran that he was reading, and carefully covered it with its silk envelope.

"I am listening, my sister," he said in his gentle, even voice. In his profound knowledge of human nature, he knew that to perfectly understand what women wished to say it was necessary to listen for a long time; so he added with a sigh, "I have an hour before me."

"You wished, Cheik-ul-Islam, or at least you consented, that our children

should be instructed in European science. Giaours have succeeded Giaours in this house, and since then the girls' minds have been enveloped in darkness. They have learnt things that are not necessary to know to ensure a happy life, and all that teaching has brought a great misfortune upon our house. Notwithstanding all the respect that I owe to my eldest brother, I tell you, Cheik-ul-Islam, that it was not your right to allow Christianity to enter our house. All misfortunes date from that."

"The harm does not come from the Christian religion—for the religion itself is a beautiful one—but from European civilization," he answered, gravely.

Rather upset by his persistent tolerance, she hung her head under the conciliatory

gaze of the old man. A new bitterness filled her heart, and then in a rush of words, with trembling voice, she told of the terrible thing that had come about, and finished by saying, "Adilé and Éminé have corresponded with those scandalous men, Noureddin Pacha and Osman Bey, and wish to marry them——"

Then, having unburdened her mind by this revelation, she lifted her eyes to her brother's face. The terrible look on his face made her heart stop beating, and a chill seemed to penetrate to her bones; for before her, deadly pale in his white garments, looking like one dead, on whom snow had fallen, he stood. Running to him, she tremblingly threw herself at his feet, kissing them.

"Essence of the creation of God—my

soul, my treasure, smile on me," she cried, with short tearless sobs. Then, seeing he cried with the slow falling tears of old age, she exclaimed passionately and sadly,

Henzer Giaour!"

CHAPTER IV

THERE were two reasons which seemed to the Cheik-ul-Islam to make the marriages impossible.

Noureddin and Osman were free-thinkers, and had brought back from their long visits to foreign capitals principles which, though they carefully concealed them from the Sultan, had already begun to be quite well known, and gave great offence to all the religious Musulmen connected with them.

They no longer believed in God, and led most dissolute lives.

Furthermore, the Cheik-ul-Islam had

decided to marry his daughter and niece to two brothers, Ali Bey and Ibrahim Bey, two strong, magnificent young men of the people, of perfect physique and irreproachable morals.

There was no question of *mésalliance* for the girls of his family in marrying them to the sons of a porter, for good qualities certainly do not come from birth, but from the heart.

Prejudices of that order are still unknown in the lives of Turks, who are not as yet contaminated by servile imitation of the morals and manners of other countries, and family names do not exist. Turkish men can only hope to attain to situations they desire by their own personal merit. Also he had taken much interest and trouble in the education of Ali and Ibrahim, who,

when quite young, had been confided to his care as orphans. The Cheik-ul-Islam thought it quite natural that the two young men should marry his daughter and niece, with whom they had been brought up till they reached the age when the custom of the country ordained that they should leave the shelter of the harem for that of the Selamléc.

The intelligence, correct bearing, and high principles of these young men, both of whom were captains in His Majesty's army, gave him complete confidence in the future happiness of the girls, and he had long ago settled that the marriages should take place when the young women had reached the age of nineteen.

Up till now the mind of the Cheik-ul-Islam had been perfectly at ease concerning them. He was well aware that (under

pretext of giving commissions to the two young officers, who every morning went to Stamboul) Éminé and Adilé, hidden behind the lattice that divided the harem from the men's quarters, used to gossip and talk with them, and was under the impression that they loved each other. The Hanem-effendi did not quite approve of the custom which allowed these two girls to communicate so often with the passionate young officers, and her nature, always prone to look on the dark side of things, was ill at ease on the possible consequences that might arise as the result of these long conversations.

Notwithstanding the discontent of his sister, the Cheik-ul-Islam altered nothing in the order of things. He tried to calm her by assuring her that though religion forbade women to show their beauty to men, lest it

should distract them from the duties of their daily life, it in no way was opposed to their exchanging intercourse that was necessary for the ordinary wants of life; and that the high rank of their respective daughters did not allow them to go and make their own purchases; and that as the fortunes of Turkish families had of late years so much decreased, the additional luxury of eunuchs was a thing of the past. Consequently it had become necessary to employ women to make the purchases for the harem, and in default of them, it was quite correct to use the men of the Selamléc.

"I can assure you," he added, "that only the most innocent and harmless things are discussed by them."

Then with his look of goodness and calm gentleness he put an end to the interview.

CHAPTER V

He absolutely and firmly declined to even consider the project of marriage desired by his daughter and niece. Thereupon the Hanem-effendi, having acquainted the two girls with his decision, they both determined to act like the heroines in European romances. They agreed between them, that they had often heard that girls whose wishes were thwarted sometimes took poison—did not die from the effects, and soon obtained from their parents leave to follow their desires.

So they ran quickly to the lattice door,

and forgetting the dignity of their position, began ringing nervously at the bell. At this hasty and unusual sound, a voice of a slave from the other side asked respectfully, "*Né dir effendim?*" ("What is it, Excellency?")

"The head of the harem has gone out, and we wish to speak to the steward of the Selamlée, or to Ibrahim Bey," they answered.

The slave went off to find one of these two, whilst the girls waited silently for some time. Presently they heard the sound of a sword dragging lightly over the ground. Éminé glanced through the lattice, and seeing the form of Ibrahim leaning against the doorway, she asked him a few polite questions concerning himself.

"I thank you, and I kiss your feet,"

answered a man's clear, strong voice, with some emotion in it.

"We want some laudanum, and you must go to Stamboul to-morrow to buy it."

"Certainly, I will do so," murmured Ibrahim, who always felt that any orders of Émine's should be obeyed; then leaning a little closer he whispered, "I have a bunch of flowers that I picked on the hills; will you have it?" Thinking that he had not sufficiently explained his mind, he added softly, "You know that, like a good Musulman, I like to wander on the hills. There one's soul is better, and I wish to beautify mine with fine thoughts whilst my hands pick the flowers that I offer you."

She thanked him with a thousand

pretty words, and opening the creaking lattice ever so little, she held out her hand and drew in the flowers, which she handed to her cousin. At the sight of the simple bunch of veronica, with its turquoise blooms trembling on their stems, the two girls stifled back their mocking laughter, and glanced at each other in merriment.

"I bound the flowers with long green grass, but perhaps you would have preferred a ribbon from Paris," said Ibrahim, with a voice that trembled slightly. "My soul," he added, after a short silence, "I have learnt some verses about you—will you listen to them?"

Poor, simple, honest man, he thought that verses were the only words fit for lovers, and with agonizing nervousness

he began to recite what he thought was so beautiful—

"God has created you——"

On the other side of the door the two girls smiled contemptuously; and that he should not hear their flight, they took their little wooden and gilded shoes in their hands, and noiselessly disappeared, laughing softly when out of sight in that evil way women do when making fun of men that love them.

Having finished reciting the poetry which he thought expressed his love so well, he imagined that a delicacy of feeling prevented Éminé from answering. Moved almost to tears himself, he murmured, "Oh, my soul," and walked away noiselessly.

The next day a fright and horror

spread through the harem, for the young Hanems declared that they had poisoned themselves because they had been refused the husbands that their souls and bodies wished for so ardently. The pain caused by laudanum was not long in coming, and the terror of the women of the harem was such that no one thought or knew how to treat them, till Éminé, who was extremely anxious not to die, suggested that a doctor should be at once summoned.

The two girls were a long time recovering, and the Hanem-effendi, somewhat more tolerant by the pain that the scandal caused her, implored Cheik-ul-Islam to give his consent.

As he gave it a new gravity seemed to take possession of his face and darken his heart, and his unhappy look seemed

as deep as the shadow in the long avenue of cypresses that bordered the road to Hedjaz.

Perhaps it was then the God allowed him to see into the future.

The two brothers were the last to learn of the approaching marriages of the girls that they loved, with Osman Bey and Noureddin Pacha.

Since the customs of the country had separated them from playfellows of childhood, they waited without anxiety for the plan of Cheik-ul-Islam to be carried out.

Ali Bey, the eldest, was extremely ugly, notwithstanding all the trouble he took with his clothes and appearance. Ugly he was, and ugly he remained—of an ugliness without possibilities or hope.

With true Turkish philosophy he resigned himself more easily than his brother did to the unhappiness of being unable to marry his *fiancée*. He had wisely always doubted that moral beauty had any great power in love affairs; and the future of married life had often caused him much uneasiness; though he had struggled against the fear, out of respect for the judgment of Cheik-ul-Islam, whom he considered as almost infallible.

Ibrahim, on the other hand (whom God had created one day when he was on good terms with manly beauty), had always felt within him a great power of loving, and with passionate longing he had looked forward to his marriage with Éminé-hanem.

To be more worthy of her love he

had obstinately repulsed all passionate feelings and love affairs, which, as everyone knows, are extraordinarily adroit in dangling themselves before the eyes of men. Looking with disgust on the race of courtesans (generally of Greek or Armenian blood), and their impurity, he voluntarily fled their presence, always saying to himself that the remembrance of their gestures of love or passion would cause him the greatest pain when he looked for the first time into the eyes of Éminé as his wife. All these ideas had often filled his mind during the long hours when on duty with his general.

On the rare occasions when he had fallen in Stamboul, he closed his eyes so as not even to see the face near him, and of these occasional lapses a sadness

always remained in his heart. Now he held himself very erect, rigid in his grief, and determined not to let himself think of the trouble which was drawing such sad lines on his beautiful face.

Formerly the women of the harem, when they saw him pass, used to say that he was beautiful and strong as a young poplar tree. They admired the perfect symmetry of his body and the grace of his every movement. The tender expression of his face and delicate features attracted even the coldest; and they used to say, "How sweet he would be to love; when we think of him we feel ourself grow feeble like fluttering doves when the royal eagle pounces on them, knowing that he will eat their very hearts. We know that he has all

the calmness and strength of a great warrior; his great eyes flash with a passion it would be useless to fight against."

Many of the women felt their bodies tremble with love for him; whilst he, out of respect for the customs of the country, pretended to be ignorant of their presence behind the lattice windows. Some of them, overcome with their passion for him, would murmur sweet things to him half under their breath as he went past.

He would listen to none of them, and his mind was full of his remembrance of Éminé, who seemed always present in his heart. With his strong imagination he could see her eyes grow liquid and tender under his own burning gaze.

Éminé was thirteen and he fifteen when for the first time her lips were pressed to

his, and left there that inextinguishable love which still shook his whole being. Had he not also tried to reach her poor little soul when talking to her every evening behind the lattice? He often thought of the simple and pure-minded things he had talked to her about, inspired by the chaste presence which he felt was so near to him. Then, one night when the spangled sky was half veiled by light clouds, he was suddenly seized with a violent desire—and that desire, which stole his pure love, came upon him with such force, causing the blood in his temples to beat so furiously and madly, that he turned and fled out into the darkness.

Since then, always dreaming of the future, he had waited with impatience when the hour should strike that should give her to him.

Alone, in the evening, when he thought of what he had lost, his despair overwhelmed him, and throwing himself down, he tore at the fine English scarf (he had tied round his strong young throat thinking to please her) and burst into a passion of hopeless tears. Realizing Eminé's treachery, he could only repeat over and over again in an agony of despair, "She has deserted me—she has deserted me."

He implored his general to send him to the regiment which was at Alep, where the climate hardly ever spared the newly come—for he wished to die.

The Cheik-ul-Islam interfered in his gentle paternal manner, and the unhappy youth gave in, in obedience to the orders of the chief of religion.

He then gave himself up entirely to his military profession, and studied German, so as to better understand the science of fighting and new military tactics, and frequented the society of European officers, but remained always a Musulman by conviction. He joined one of the powerful and mysterious brotherhoods which, from India to Morocco, and from the Balkans to the south of Africa, appeal so strongly to the spirit of the Islamites.

CHAPTER VI

If anything ever happened to worry the Cheik-ul-Islam, he felt always the desire to go and talk things over with *Dada*,[1] who had watched over his childhood. But the poor old woman had just died from old age, which caused him the greatest grief, for she alone was able to give him consolation in his troubles; and this new grief smote him in the remembrances that were most dear to him—those of the old days which the humble slave had made so happy with her care and tenderness.

[1] A slave who acts as nurse to the children in harems.

Her death had caused consternation in the harem, for there they venerated her almost as a saint, and waited from day to day expecting her third dentition. It is said that when anyone reaches a hundred and eight or nine that a new set of teeth comes through the old gums.

As a point of fact the old woman did not exactly know her age, like most old slaves, and did not attach the slightest importance to it.

She used to say that, thanks to Allah, the complicated and useless laws of far-off people had not yet penetrated to Turkey, where still they could live and die in perfect liberty.

The entire harem had been greatly delighted at the prospect of seeing the teeth of her second childhood. Even the

Selamléc (men's division) was interested in the probable phenomenon, and the *Lala* (male guardian of children in the Selamléc) was anxiously expecting to hear of her first tooth. For at the beginning of time, when he was twenty-five years old and she forty, he had wished to marry her.

Consequently, though the marriage had not come off, he had never forgotten her, and the mystery that surrounds a harem still left in his imagination the idea that she was as beautiful as when once, by chance through an open door, he had seen her without a veil.

In truth, what was left of her was only a small body of mere skin and bones, shrunk and crumpled, looking like nothing human. For many years past she had become a malicious little old gnome, who, with sur-

prising quickness, spied out the smallest doings in the harem, and who passed her day on her divan giving her advice about a thousand trifles; though it must be said that the advice was not always followed. With a long stick she was always ready, with her little claw-like hands, to defend herself against the innocent but irritating teasing of the younger girls of the harem.

When he was sad or worried the Cheik-ul-Islam was accustomed to send a slave to fetch her on her back to him, for she had long ago lost the use of her legs.

As soon as he knew the wishes and intentions of his niece and daughter, he told the old woman how great a grief it was to him, and begged her to use all her influence to dissuade them from

their projects. She seemed much affected by his news, her eyes rolling ceaselessly in their cavernous hollows — the only part of her that seemed to retain any life.

She used to watch the coming and going of the men of the Selamléc under her windows, and always her old eyes brightened feverishly when she saw Ibrahim, when she would cry out, "Machallah! what a beautiful body, and what a fine Musulman soul inhabits it. In all my life I have never seen such a man—whilst our children prefer atheists, men sunk in vice, who, since their return, have the indecency to make their women undress before them. Yes—in looking at women quite nude they are committing a deadly sin. Was it necessary that I should live so long as to learn that

such things could exist? Love! that till now has been so chaste and beautiful amongst us: will it become horrible and disgusting with the new morals brought to our midst by the infidels? Are our women going to wear low dresses? To think of it makes my head whirl."

Then, returning to the subject of Ibrahim, she upheld him in opposition as a good Turk to Colonel Osman and General Noureddin, whom she said were civilized by a civilization terrible in contrast to the Musulman morals. Then she cried aloud as the Cheik-ul-Islam passed, "Look at the Lion of Islamism. When you see him one knows that sorrow has placed a sad despair in his eyes! He makes me think of an extinct volcano that I saw long ago, when travelling through an unknown country,

before I was sold at Stamboul, that burning mountain (which seemed like a giant, petrified with pain and grief) that for hundreds of years had stood reflected in the calm waters at its feet."

Then by some evil of the cheitan (devil) the old *dada*, who was about to give advice to those round her, lost the thread of her discourse, and grew nervous at the feeling of light-headedness.

Drawing up her little withered body, she murmured brokenly, "My head is emptying itself of all my ideas—I feel it shrinking—shrinking, till it is only the size of a cherry. Ah, my children, listen to me, struggle against civilization which destroys happiness. Struggle—stru——"

Her mouth moved noiselessly for a moment or two; and then she fell, a small

crumpled heap of clothes, her body almost already in dust.

The *dada* was dead. As is the custom, she was quickly put into a coffin and hurriedly carried to the cemetery.

CHAPTER VII

After the death of the old nurse, the Cheik-ul-Islam, quite broken with the blow, no longer refused his blessing on the marriage of the daughters of his house.

But as there was so much misery and wretchedness throughout the Empire, he ordered none of the *fêtes* usual on such important occasions of life.

Adilé-hanem went with her husband to a distant district, where Noureddin Pacha had been appointed as governor ; and Éminé went with Osman Bey to live with his mother, who inhabited a beautiful house

at Bebek, on the European side of the Bosphorus.

As is the custom, many visits were exchanged between the bride and her family; but notwithstanding her experience of life, the Hanem-effendi did not see on her daughter's face any particular expression of happiness such as newly-married people usually bear.

She worried about it a good deal, but did not dare ask any questions on such a delicate subject. Still, in her mind she reserved her opinion amongst the secrets she knew of her son-in-law's life, waiting with patience for what should happen.

Sometimes she said half aloud, "*Bakalem!*" (We shall see.)

Occasionally Éminé-hanem came and

visited her family, and having kissed the hand of her uncle and mother, she would sit and smoke a cigarette or two in silence, and drink some coffee, with a vague look on her face, as if awaiting the return of someone who had vanished; then, having made one or two polite observations, would wrap herself in her *tcharchaf*, and, followed by her steward and a slave, would embark in her caique and leave without a word of explanation. One day, when the stifling heat of August had plunged the whole harem in the most profound rest, the knocker on the door sounded noisily several times, and echoed loudly through the big marble hall. A slave, hastily drawing her sash round her, ran and opened it.

Éminé-hanem stood there, with several slaves behind her, bearing bundles of her

clothes in silk bags. Slowly walking to her old room, she took off her veil and said calmly, "I have come back to live here; I did wrong to leave you."

Then drawing her lips close together, and, from a sense of pride, showing no emotion, she allowed a heavy silence to fall between herself and her mother, who had come quickly to bid her welcome. After several days' rest she asked her uncle, in a quiet, simple manner, to get her divorce for her. He listened without surprise or anger, only begging that she would do nothing hastily.

"I know nothing, my child, of the wrongs your husband has done you; but I pray, even command, you to wait till absolute calmness has entered your heart before you take any step." Also the Hanem-effendi begged her to decide nothing for

two or three months. Éminé looked at them with sad but tearless eyes, and bowed her head in acquiescence, and in a few days the peaceful monotony of the harem surrounded them again.

Nevertheless the indiscretion of a slave made all the household of Cheik-ul-Islam aware of the fact that during the first week of his married life Osman had diabolically found the means to seduce three of his wife's slaves, and that the following week, inspired by his European education, he had done the same with the remaining four belonging to Éminé, whilst she was amiably receiving the felicitations of his friends, who had come to see her and witness her happiness.

Whenever she looked at those slaves, who had come to rejoin her at her uncle's house, it seemed to her that each one of them bore

on her a bit of her torn heart. Her dignity and pride prevented her from reproaching them for their weakness. On the contrary, she schooled herself to give them her orders with more gentleness of manner than she ever used in her happier days.

Such as it was, she bore her pain in silence, till one day the agony of it was too strong for her, and she could not refrain from showing her bitterness against the prettiest of those who served her, by sending the girl from her personal service to the more arduous and menial duties of the harem.

The poor girl wept bitterly, for she loved her mistress, and she already knew what the future had in store for her. After five months of physical and moral suffering she gave premature birth to a child ; though all

that time no one suspected her condition. At that piteous sight Éminé knew that in her heart was growing the generosity of the wife, which could not help loving the children of her husband. She did her best to look after the poor little thing, which could not open its eyes on the world, and cried without ceasing. Hoping to still it, she breathed all sorts of caressing words into its little ears, and nursed it with tenderness in her trembling arms. The suffering of life was too strong, and its feeble, incessant cry wrung her heart, though she never let it out of her arms. It died; and as it lay on her knees, through its closed eyelids she seemed to see for the first time its eyes fixed on hers.

With the pain she felt at losing it, she understood that she loved her husband in

spite of all she knew about his dissolute life, and she began to forget the wrongs he had done her.

She learnt that he was living sometimes at Tera, sometimes in Paris with a French demi-mondaine, and she experienced a bitterness of heart, the like of which she had never felt before. By degrees there came into her life a sort of calm, and the wish grew in her to conform to the customs and morals of her childhood. In the evening she mixed with the women, and murmured word by word verses of the Koran, which her uncle chanted in his gentle, slow voice behind the wooden lattice-work which separated the men from the women in the great hall of prayer. She listened to the male voices of the *imans* and *mollahs*, who repeated with musical

cadence the sacred words, "God alone is great." She saw through the woodwork, under the pale light of lamps that burnt sweet-smelling oil, the green turbans bowing slowly, and her gaze wandered further to the multitude of white ones which rose and fell regularly like the crests of slow-rolling waves.

One evening, leaning her head against one of the great white marble columns which supported the roof, she closed her eyes, and almost passed into unconsciousness, like a child who falls asleep knowing that a happy day is promised it for the morrow. Suddenly, like a flash of lightning across the clearest of summer skies, the remembrance of Osman struck fiercely at her heart. Without waiting for the end of the prayer, she quickly wrapped her silver

embroidered *tcharchaf* round her, and crossing the garden, she leant tearless and motionless against the great trunk of the arbutus tree, which stood near the door. Under its great shadow, which covered her as a heavy veil, she waited with bent head, hesitating whether she should call the steward or Ibrahim, and ask for news of her husband. Almost unconsciously, with her little feet in the gilded and delicate wooden shoes, she crushed on the white marble floor the scarlet and purple fruit, that full of life had fallen from the sombre tree, and soon the hem of her dress was stained with their crimson juice. Then she feverishly approached the lattice, and in her agitation she called aloud, "Ibrahim — Ibrahim," with a ringing, broken voice, as when some fine crystal

vase falls and breaks on the marble floor of a mosque.

"I am here," he answered. "What do you wish?"

Both of them, suddenly overwhelmed with confused thoughts, were still, and allowed the waves of silence to close over their heads.

Ever since he knew that she had been soiled by the embraces of Osman, he experienced extreme discomfort at having to stand immovable behind the lattice-door, and to shorten his pain he said, "What can I do—what ought I to do for you?"

The terrible, hopeless sadness of her voice pierced his heart as she said, "My heart is dying within me. I implore you to tell me the truth; it seems that they hide something from me. Tell me the truth, and I

shall grow sane again. Ibrahim, Ibrahim, what has become of Osman? Where is he?"

And then, in the silence that followed, he knew that she was crying. He thought even that he heard the heavy tears fall one by one from those beautiful eyes on to the ground.

"Those pretty blue flowers will open under those tears, and I—I cannot pick them," he said to himself.

The thought of her misery and his own unhappy life so moved him that, without thinking of what he was saying, he told her what all her world had kept from her—namely, the arrest of Osman Bey for high treason, and the clemency shown by the Sultan, who, instead of ordering perpetual imprisonment, had exiled him to Bagdad.

CHAPTER VIII

Éminé sent a messenger to her husband to know what were his intentions and wishes, with the result that he sent back word, imploring her to come to him. So, braving the fatigue and dangers of the long journey, she joined him at Bagdad.

There, after a considerable period of depression and unhappiness, Osman gradually began to find again some pleasure in life, and with him it took the form of falling desperately in love with Alie, a slave that his wife had bought on her

arrival. He entirely altered his mode of life, and became the most peaceable of Musulmen. Transformed by the love he had for this slave, and under the influence of her advice, he frankly told his wife that he loved Alie with a passion he felt would never alter, and, kissing her hands, begged her forgiveness for the wrongs he had done her and for what he was doing now.

A cold look of disdain was the only answer she gave him. In the long weary hours she passed alone, Éminé suffered intensely, and sat motionless by the hour, the bitter tears falling behind her veil. She tried to make up her mind to some definite action. For one moment she thought of selling the girl, but her instinctive generosity made her repel

the temptation that so strongly assailed her.

Not wishing to suffer—indeed, feeling that she would be unable to bear the tortures that Osman inflicted on her—she took her courage in both hands and decided to ask for a divorce and to return to her uncle.

At her request the *Iman* of Bagdad came to pronounce the decree. On hearing his steps approaching the *portière* behind which she was to stand hidden from his eyes, her heart beat so frightfully in her grief that she thought she would be unable to pronounce the words of renouncement necessary.

She managed, however, to whisper them without crying, holding herself erect; then drawing the slave Alie (whom

she had insisted upon being present) towards her, she took her by the hand, and asked the *Iman* through the curtain whether Osman was near him, and getting an answer in the affirmative, she said in her slow, grave voice, full of sadness, "I wish to assist at the marriage of Osman with my slave, to whom I now give her freedom. I pray that you will marry them in my presence."

The *Iman*, through the curtain, took hold of the slave's hand, and turning first to Osman, and then towards her who remained invisible, said, "God is merciful, and I unite you two before Him."

Éminé shortly afterwards left Bagdad, her conscience at rest, but feeling that never again could her heart ever beat for man.

She reached her uncle's house early one morning, just as the sun was rising, and throwing scarlet and orange streaks like ribbons of blood across the sky and sea. Having pushed softly open the great garden door, she stood for a moment bathed in the crimson and gold light; then crossing the grass, spangled with a thousand fallen jasmine blossoms, she slowly climbed the white marble steps in the silent, sleeping garden that led to the room of her uncle. For an instant she stood motionless, with a sort of terror at her heart, then letting fall her gold-embroidered *tcharchaf*, she stood before him.

The gentle kindness of his great sad eyes disarmed her, and melted her heart. Running to him, and hiding her face in his white cloak, she burst into tears.

CHAPTER IX

A WHOLE year had passed since the divorce between Osman and Éminé. Spring was on the earth, and under the dazzling glory of the blue sky a wonderful peace seemed to lie over the country round, and on the Bosphorus, that stretched out towards the Dardanelles. The boatmen, floating on the waters, were singing the long sweet songs in minor keys that struck the heart with infinite sadness.

As the Spring had burst upon the world, making it beautiful once more with its covering of flowers and scented

air, Émine's heart awoke from its long stupor, and a desire seized her to do something with her life.

Her uncle advised her to take a steward and one or two slaves and instal herself in the kiosque that stood on the hill of Anatolou-Hissar, and to try and take some interest in the monastery that he was having built not far from there. It was there he intended that the dervish Saadetdin should live and direct the theological studies of the young and poor that he took under his protection.

This property was looked after by the foresters and shepherds who pastured their flocks in the neighbourhood.

"I authorize you, my child," he said, "to study theology with the dervish, if that is your wish. Perhaps by these

means you will be able to give up your time to religion, which will endow you with an interest in life, though I should much prefer that you should rest quietly; for the fault in you is too passionate a nature, which, by my weakness in allowing you to be educated by strangers, has only been aggravated."

For some time Éminé might have thought that theological studies were enough to fill her life, but the passionate woman was always there and alive within her, and whilst listening to the saintly words of the dervish, her eyes were always mentally seeking the horizon. She was waiting for the ideal man that she could love with all the passion that stirred her heart with desire and thrilled her beautiful limbs.

Her heart was like some deep dark pool in a dim lighted wood, where suddenly unexpected things floated to the still surface. She could no longer content herself with the simple pleasures of everyday life, but waited feverishly for something definite—strong—she knew not what.

In her solitary walks on the hills she used to meet the shepherds and foresters, servants of her uncle, who, at her approach, as was customary, turned their backs to her, or stood still with their heads bent till she had gone past, as a sign of respect.

Sometimes she used to question them, and tried to interest herself in their one idea, which was how to fight best against the enemies of the Sultan. "Soon, without doubt, they would cut off their heads, which would be blown to the corners of the earth

like chaff before the wind," they used to say.

She could not see any expression on their faces, but she guessed that the desire to fight and conquer for Islam lit up their eyes with a consuming fire, and she felt a pride in belonging to this warrior race, faithful to its faith and sovereign.

One day, having seen Hassan-agha, the oldest of the servants, sitting under the white waving blossom of a cherry-tree, rocking a child in a Turkish hammock, she went nearer to him; but her little shoes made a noise on the dry ground, and Hassan said anxiously, "Éminé-hanem, I kiss your feet, but still their noise, for Mahommed sleeps."

Mahommed was sleeping under the cherry-blossoms, hung in red netting, which

Hassan rocked with his foot, whilst with trembling hands the old man was with care embroidering a red cypress on a little white woollen stocking. He worked away like that, living in the certainty that when he reached Paradise all payment would be made to him for what he had laboured at on earth.

He was so old that long ago all smiles had died in the expression of the dry, withered face, leaving only a look of inexpressible sweet resignation. His great age and long service in the family allowed him to look on the face of his master's niece, and to tell her all the simple things that were in his mind. He took off his great horn spectacles and let his eyes rest upon her. Seeing that she glanced down indifferently on the sleeping Mahommed,

and that she did not seem disposed to talk to him about the child, he began singing softly to himself with a trembling cracked voice.

"The butterfly has come and laid the heart of flowers on your lips, Mahommed; the bee has come to buzz round your brow, Mahommed; sleep, essence of my soul, for the bee buzzes; your eyes, when they open, illumine the earth, Mahommed; your mouth is a ripe fruit, Mahommed; the heavy sweat shall pour down from your brow in battle, Mahommed: sleep."

At these words Éminé looked at the child, and saw the damp on its forehead, and, taking from her breast her soft warm handkerchief, she leant over the sleeping child and wiped the drops from its temples.

"Its soul rests, whilst its skin weeps," she said, gravely, whilst looking on Mahommed's face, which she thought quite ugly.

"Yes," murmured Hassan, "the spirit of the future warrior evaporates from his body. See the essence of his soul which rises, and will sow the skies with golden and rose-coloured clouds—it is beautiful, is it not?"

Eminé turned and leant against the trunk of the tree, admiring the richness and imaginative powers of the poor old man, and in her dream her mind wandered away over the country, like an adder that slips through the grass and ferns in a wood. She sighed deeply and unconsciously, wrapped in the past.

The old servant began to embroider a

blue tortoise beside the red cypress. In the profound silence they heard the sheep munching the grass with quick, crisp sounds; and two swallows circled low, followed by their blue shadows as they skimmed over the flower-studded grass. In the soft fragrant air and over the white hanging cherry-blossoms, a calm, pure voice rose, singing, imploring, begging——

Émine suddenly felt that her heart was trembling, beating like the wings of a caged bird, and she looked enquiringly at Hassan-agha.

"It is the woman of the hill—the courtesan calling to the passers-by," explained the old man. "She has come back, and will sing every evening on the ruined wall belonging to your Excellencies. After all, her mission to the world is not a sin,

for it is not good for men to live entirely alone on the hills. Her name is Leila, and Mahommed, here, is her son."

With a sort of instinct to ward off disagreeable and unclean words, Éminé drew her yellow silk cloak more closely round her, and Hassan was silent.

Presently, looking out vaguely over the distant green country, she said quietly, "Why did not one of you marry the mother of Mahommed?"

He answered slowly, "It has been discovered that when you graft a cherry-tree with various sorts of cherries, the fruit bears various scents, and——"

"Say no more—I understand," she murmured, drawing the yellow silk even more tightly round her.

"Look, Excellency," said Hassan, leaning

over the sleeping child, "see on his little forehead the obstinate determination to fight against and exterminate the enemies of the Sultan. In him will be concentrated all the warlike qualities of several generations. He has the innate desire to suffer and die for Islam. From his earliest infancy he moved his arms as if cutting off the heads of thousands; it is wonderful. His body is but eight years old, but his pride is of centuries."

She listened no longer.

"Éminé-hanem, your soul floats out following your eyes, which wander as if begging for love, and you listen to me no longer," he added, rather severely, hurt by the inattention of his mistress.

She blushed faintly and tried to look interested.

"Mahommed already learns to recite verses on the beauty of the Sultans. He knows that their faces are magnificent, and that their brows are like the quarters of the moon; he knows their eyes are like two drops of azure fallen into a field of sacred lilies."

This was too much for Éminé, who liked descriptions to be exact, for she interrupted him, saying, "But our well-beloved sovereign has large black eyes."

"Effendim," he retorted, more severely, "our fathers have always seen the faces of the Sultans as we have been taught to describe them, and thus they will always see them."

She bent her head, feeling that she had been imprudent, for beliefs are delicate birds, and if they are driven far from the

nest they change into birds of prey. She wished to move away, but he went on, "I forgot to tell your Excellency that I met Ibrahim Bey this morning, who was looking for you. He seemed much irritated about something, and his sword made a great clatter against the side of his horse as he galloped off. He is a fine soldier, but—" and he dropped his voice, looking vaguely into the distance with the chill eyes of a seer, "above his brow I saw a bloody cloud."

An odd sensation of distant trouble seized Éminé, and she stood up, struck with a mortal fear of some unknown thing. A thousand confused noises beat in her ears, but fighting down this inexplicable terror she walked away in the direction of the monastery, where she thought she might learn the reason of Ibrahim seeking her out.

It was he himself that she found there, and not waiting for her questions, he turned his back to her, as is the custom, and said in a strangely altered voice, "I have just been warned that Noureddin Pacha and his wife Adilé-hanem have arrived from Yemen, and they intend in a few days coming to stay in the house of our well-loved Cheik-ul-Islam. At all costs this scandal must be averted. Noureddin is a wretch, who, since his stay in Europe, has learnt what he calls 'liberal ideas,' a tissue of lies and infamous things that he preaches to our soldiers since his return to Turkey. Secretly he is demoralizing the army, teaching the soldiers to deny the existence of a God. He conspires against the Sultan; and that that atheist should live under the roof of the chief of our sacred

religion is a sacrilege. I will strangle him with my own hands sooner than he should cross the threshold of our dwelling."

His eyes glittered, and he feverishly ground his teeth, as if ready to tear out with them the hearts of the would-be destroyers of their ancient traditions.

Éminé was going to speak when he interrupted her quickly. "Be silent," he said, speaking as familiarly as when they were children. "I know you are going to say I have made a mistake; no—what I know I am certain about, for I belong to a secret brotherhood, which, from India to Morocco, follows the minds of Musulmen. We have watched over Noureddin, and if that young general does not return to his God and sovereign, I will kill him; I swear it at the foot of this monastery before you."

He moved away without wishing to listen to what she would say. She stood still, watching his magnificent warlike figure go down the hill, till only his scarlet fez was in sight.

"Above his brow I saw a bloody cloud," she murmured, half aloud, repeating the words of the old man Hassan.

The setting sun threw a purple glow over the Bosphorus, and a flock of sea-birds plunged down into its calm waters; then floating up into space, their wings seemed steeped in the blood-red glow which came from the horizon. Their shrill cries attracted her attention. A sudden fear seized her, and she cried aloud, "Allah! why, O Allah! do my eyes see everywhere the stain of red?"

CHAPTER X

She walked away and entered the garden of the monastery. Here, under a great tree, the dervish Saadetdin was sitting in an attitude of marvellous immobility.

On an immensely high hat of grey felt, upright like a chimney, sparrows, swollen with their own importance, jumped about, sometimes pecking at his nose, so sure were they of their immunity. They twittered and fought on his enormous stomach, and the unhappy dervish, being afraid of alarming his little companions, sweated blood and water on trying to stifle his

heavy breathing, which made his body rise and fall like the swell of the sea.

At Émine's sudden entrance the birds all flew away, whilst the dervish glanced reproachfully at her. Seeing that she remained silent, he thought that from politeness he should begin the conversation. "I think," he said, with dignity, "that the likeness of celestial distractions is reflected in the pleasures of country life. The sparrows eat the cherries from the trees which I cultivate with great care in boxes, so as to eat the fruit myself before the month of May. I know, of course, that people drive away these little birds, notwithstanding that they must live. On the other hand I beg you to observe that my cherry trees are about to blush like an unveiled virgin, and you will

understand how annoying it is to me to see my fruit eaten. Nevertheless things must follow the course of nature, and I prefer to live in peace with these little pillagers rather than to see them fly away."

Understanding from her silence that Éminé was not inclined to peaceful conversation, he rubbed gently his bare foot with the palm of his hand. He was beginning to fear that she had reserved a few agitating things to tell him which would spoil the harmony of the beautiful evening, and he sighed profoundly.

Éminé stood before him with her hands tightly clasped.

"My soul is in trouble, my father," she said.

"*Aman !* (My God)," interrupted gravely

the dervish, "I beg you will leave your soul in peace, my child."

"I am afraid—Ibrahim threatens to kill Noureddin, and I dare not warn my uncle. His health has given us great anxiety for some time. What is to be done; what do you think, my father?" she asked, in an anxious tone.

"What you tell me breaks my rest," answered the dervish, drily. "It is not possible—I have never seen murder in my life. It is a painful thing, about which I know nothing. This threat of Ibrahim's is the result of the combination of the spring-time and the quickening of the mad blood which runs in the veins of all young men at this time of the year. Do not be uneasy, my child, I will speak to him. Besides, how can we take this threat seriously, when

only the other day I saw him miserable at having killed a lizard to please Mohammed? He held it in his hand, saying to me, 'See how pretty it is, with its tail all powdered with gold; how could I have killed it—how could I have committed this useless act of cruelty?' *Aman*, my day is spoilt. And you believe that he would kill a general of the Turkish army? I cannot conceive such a thing possible, unless we have reasons given us which he has concealed, for proving that Noureddin is really the demoralizer he thinks."

Feeling that the interview had lasted long enough on a subject which he considered of slight importance, and damaging to the pleasure of country life, he gazed out on the Bosphorus, which lay gleaming at the foot of the hill. Then, more happy after a

short contemplation of what lay before him, he called gently to his lambs, which were browsing near. He gave no further thought to what Émine had confided to him, for he thought he saw in her only the ridiculous exaggeration of European women who travelled, and came out of curiosity to see, and who laughed at him behind his back. Still, though he tried to banish it all from his mind, he remained a little pensive after strangers' visits, for as a rule their want of education did not wound him, because those women were of another religion.

Presently he opened a bag of beautifully worked leather, and drew from it strings of blue beads, whose virtue against the evil-eye was undoubted. These he hung round the necks of his lambs, and stood patting and caressing their white fleeces, which in

some places he had dyed with brilliant colours.

Reassured by the promises of the dervish, Éminé no longer thought of leaving the kiosque, for they had arranged that it was only at the end of the month that she should return to her uncle's house. So she lived again her existence of dreams and long solitary walks about the immense domain! In spite of herself her thoughts often turned to Ibrahim, and seemed to hover round him, and when she realized how often he was in her mind she would blush suddenly.

All this seemed to her so little what it should be, that she made up her mind to look the other way whenever she should see him on the high road, on horseback, on his

way to the military station at the top of the hill.

In such cases it is remarkable that women often do exactly the opposite of what they have determined on; consequently she frequently followed him with her eyes; admiring his virile beauty. Perhaps what struck her most in him was his perfect simplicity, and she felt that his austerity and the restrained passion in his face were mysteriously attractive. He held his head high, free from his shoulders, as a young Calife who glances down at his people prostrating themselves. She acknowledged his strength of character to herself, and in a dull half-pained way, felt the feminine regret in her heart that she was no longer desired by the man whom she had thrown over.

One day, hardly conscious of what she

was doing, she had brushed aside her veil, so that he could see her beauty; she even called to him gently; "Ibrahim! Ibrahim!"

He passed without turning his head, pretending to be unconscious of her presence. He no longer desired her since she had belonged to another.

She understood his disgust, and a shame seized her, that she had wished for the kisses of a man whom she had never loved. In her sudden feeling of contempt for herself she covered her eyes with her hand, unable to bear the dazzling light of day that shone on her blushing cheeks.

After that incident she determined to walk always in another part of the domain, trying to forget the instinctive and humiliating temptation into which she had fallen. However, one day suddenly they met face

to face at the turn of a road, and stood looking at each other in silence, when slowly a current of passion seemed to surge up from one to the other.

He looked at her fixedly, almost cruelly, whilst his fine passionate eyes seemed to pierce to her very soul; then he turned on his heel, saying very distinctly and coldly, "I would sooner die than marry you!"

CHAPTER XI

Éminé, having learnt that it was the time when the woman sang on the hill, went and sat down not far from the ruined wall.

Leila only appeared periodically, and, standing on the fallen stones, sang her summons to the few people who passed. The foresters and shepherds and men who worked and lived on the hills came at her call; but sometimes they threw stones at her, not with evil intentions towards her, as they said, but to put the temptations of the flesh out of their reach. She walked with great dignity, her long green draperies

trailing in heavy folds round her. She was so accustomed to make signs and gestures of love, that even when quite alone, in absolute solitude, she would press her hand to her lips, and then on her eyes, which custom, when done before a man, signified, "I kiss the pupils of your eyes." When she saw Éminé, her first impulse was flight, but the gentle words which reached her from the niece of Cheik-ul-Islam emboldened her to approach, and in a trembling voice she said:

"Allow me to withdraw, I beg of you; I know who you are, and I am overwhelmed with confusion. I speak a language that you cannot understand, for you must be ignorant of the life that only the earth teaches."

Éminé smiled kindly at her, and assured her that she was well-disposed towards her.

Then Leila, feeling more at ease, placed on the ground her bundle of clothes, which she always carried with her, and hastily put on a pair of yellow leather shoes, to show to Éminé how great an honour she considered the interview with her ; then stepping up to her with wonderful grace of movement, she bent down and kissed her hand.

"Perhaps you do not know," she said, "that I am a wandering courtesan, and that I belong to all men ; for so the great teaching wishes it to be. They say to me, 'Come,' and I go, for they are the great power that fertilizes the earth."

Seeing that Éminé still smiled, she let herself gracefully sink on the grass beside her, forgetting that it was not the custom to sit down in the presence of a great lady. She looked at her wonderingly and in

silence for some minutes, and then suddenly a smile full of confidence lit up her beautiful face, with its deep-fringed green eyes. Her body and clothes exhaled the fragrance of wild thyme, and her firm, slender limbs made Éminé think of wild young animals that run wild in forests.

"I live always alone," she said, with the slow, gentle voice of one beginning a story; then she was silent, whilst her eyes looked vaguely over the country, as if seeking an explanation for the mystery of her life from the depths of Asia.

"Every night," she continued, "I sing on ruined walls, or where masses of stones are piled up and overlook the country. I call men to me, and when I hear them near me, I know that they imagine all sorts of wonderful things. Some of them grow sad,

and spit on me, crying, 'Get from our sight, child of evil.' I tell you this," she explained, fearing that she had said too much, "because as you called me to you, it is because you wish to know what I do. I can only talk to you of my life, because you are the first woman who has listened to me since the death of the old courtesan who taught me, and the teaching says you must love all men because they are powerful."

Éminé hid her face in her hands, filled with pity and shame.

"See," Leila continued, "there is only one thing that hurts me in the tenderest part of my heart; it is that I am obliged to hide from Mohammed that he is my son. If he knew it, he would follow me, and that cannot be, for he is destined to fight against

the enemies of Islam, as head of the Sultan's army. He lives at present only amongst men. Listen to me, I pray you; look into my eyes; see how bright they are, reflecting the blue of the skies and the green beauty of earth. Well, for love of Mohammed I would tear them out myself."

Lifting her arm above her head, with the palm of the hand towards the sky, she took God to witness of her oath. Her large loose sleeve and drapery fell away from her shoulder and side, showing the beautiful roundness and perfect lines of her body.

"Are you happy?" asked Éminé, in a very low voice.

"I don't know," she answered, with a smile that died vaguely, as if ignorant why it had existed.

Suddenly she saw that night was falling,

and began to watch for people passing in the dusk.

"You must leave me," she said, in rather a hard voice; "the moment has now come; I hear the step of some illustrious person on the road that leads to the monastery."

At these words Éminé had the strongest desire to tell her how great was the shame of such a life, but before the absolute unconsciousness of ill-doing in the girl she felt herself powerless. Sighing deeply, she rose and walked slowly away. When she had gone some little distance she turned and looked back at the creature which had so captivated her. She saw her standing immovable as the ruins of the great wall, singing; and her voice rose and fell with the clear sound of a bell on the evening air.

This was what she was singing.

"I am like a flower with my petals closed, O illustrious one who passes" (all passers-by were illustrious for her).

"Do not go away without having tasted of my kisses."

"My heart thrilled and told me you were coming."

"You are the strength of the earth, and without you I weep."

"O illustrious one, come to me, and I shall be like the grain of wheat which, fruitful and holy, springs from the ground to nourish men."

Then Éminé heard the savage cry of pleasure of the man who answered the call of the woman, and in the profound silence it seemed to her that a great sadness hung like a heavy veil of mourning over the world.

Later Leila came and sat down again beside her, drawing the folds of her veil decently over her, and saying :

" Éminé-hanem, the great personage who has left me was very poor, and I would not take the little money he offered me, for I thought that you would pay for him. Ought not the rich to come to the aid of the poor ? "

A tremulous, half-sad smile crept over Éminé's face, as vague as a summer wind that scarcely ripples a sleeping lake ; and searching for her purse amongst the folds of her chemise, she hesitated for a moment, whilst a burning blush rose to her face. Then, seeing the quiet unconsciousness of the woman, she felt an overwhelming pity for her, and held out to her a piece of gold.

CHAPTER XII

When Éminé left the kiosque to return to and live in her uncle's house, she was surprised to find how excited everyone was.

They knew that Noureddin Pacha liked good living and every sort of comfort round him, so they tried as well as they could to beautify and improve the rooms that he and his young wife were going to occupy.

The slaves examined carefully what was left of what once had been of great beauty and luxury in the wonderful old

treasure chests. They hung a golden *portière* over the entrance to the rooms, and surrounded the bed with mauve silk gauze. With great difficulty and care they brought two immense gold lamps like those that light the Sultan's mosque, and placed them in the centre of the bedroom, throwing over the bed a large silk coverlet embroidered thickly with flowers in pale colours.

Some of the women blushed when they thought to themselves how they would have to appear without veils before Noureddin Pacha, whom they knew to be a very handsome man, and their hands trembled in touching and arranging the things that were to be for his personal use.

After the arrival of Adilé and Noureddin,

Éminé pretended that her health was not good enough to allow her to sit up at night, and obstinately refused to be present in the evening at the family gatherings in the apartments of Cheik-ul-Islam.

Though her nearness of relationship gave her every right to be on intimate terms even to the point of unveiling, Éminé was careful never to be in her cousin's rooms when Noureddin returned from the War Office, and she never took advantage of her opportunities to know or talk with him, who certainly was the clèverest and most brilliant of the young Turkish generals.

By accident one day she met him in the passage that led from the garden to the harem, and both stopped for a moment.

Seeing such a beautiful woman before him, Noureddin instinctively put his hand to his mouth, pretending to look the other way; but a feeling of violent curiosity was too strong for him, and like two fiery arrows his eyes looked straight into hers.

Some time after their arrival Adilé-hanem caught a chill whilst boating on the Bosphorus, and notwithstanding all the efforts of a French doctor of great reputation, she died, leaving all her relatives in great grief, for she had become as gentle and sweet-dispositioned as a tame dove.

Éminé was much affected at her death, and was very careful to avoid meeting Noureddin, who had not left the place,

when Adilé died, at the particular request of Cheik-ul-Islam. She had decided not to think of him at all, and set herself to read severe theological works, which must have bored even the writers of them, in old days.

Yet the reading of those books only showed her that her life should be for the good of the earth, and not only for the gain of heaven. The clever and aged saints who wrote those things knew well that it should be so, and smiled quietly in their white beards at the idea that their edifying words would kindle desires for creating new lives in the world.

After two long months passed in reading their exhortations to renounce human joys, Éminé felt overcome with

a soft longing for some other human heart to beat with hers, and she could not help seeing that, in spite of all the sadness and disappointment she had found in life, that her beauty was as great as ever.

Her inexplicable weakness gave her a feeling of horror when she thought of it, and she asked herself again and again how she could have wished for the caresses and love of a man she did not love. What madness was it that induced her to unveil herself before Ibrahim, tempting him in that way? At times it seemed to her that her soul and life would remain for ever stained by that momentary act. The remembrance of the threats that Ibrahim had uttered against Noureddin had almost vanished

from her mind, for she thought that the state of excitement had been calmed by the good advice of the dervish.

One day she had gone to the lattice-door that divided the harem from the Selamlée, and knocked, so that the steward should give her a parcel of stuffs she had commissioned him to buy, when the clear, strong voice of Ibrahim answered:

"It is I"; then he added, speaking softly, but with great distinctness, "I had hoped on returning from Smyrna to find that Noureddin was no longer under this sacred roof. I shall not denounce him to Cheik-ul-Islam, for his old age must pass in peace, but let me tell you, once more, he is a traitor, and conspires against the Sultan and our religion. If he does not leave here I shall kill

him. Warn him secretly that his sacrilegious plans are discovered by an officer, who, instead of denouncing and giving him up to the just anger of the Sultan, will prevent further scandal by stopping his revolutionary propaganda. Tell him that the hour has struck when, to defend our religion, our sacred laws, our traditions, and our well-loved sovereign against the cursed plans of those devils who have come back from Europe, we shall be obliged to commit crimes. He laughs at the peace that till now has existed in our family dwellings; he hopes to escape the just punishment for his ill-doing. Tell him he is mistaken. The civilization brought from Europe sows only hatred and division between us. If Noureddin insists upon teaching the

Army to no longer believe in God, and in the Sultan, his shadow on earth; I—I wish it to keep the traditions of our race—One of us will kill the other."

"*Aman, effendim,* be silent—cease telling me these horrible words of hate and anger. Ibrahim! come back to your old nature, be yourself again," said Émine, her voice trembling with emotion, and pressing nearer to the lattice, unconsciously almost trying to break the frail wood-work that separated them.

Then without thinking what she was doing, she ran to the door which led from the harem garden to the Selamléc, and seizing Ibrahim by the arm, she drew him beneath the shadow of the great arbutus tree, and taking his hand with her trembling fingers, she kissed it, almost religiously,

begging him to calm himself, saying, "Ibrahim, my lamb, be yourself again."

He, for the second time only in his life, saw her entirely unveiled, and looked at her critically. He had thought to find her beauty tarnished by love that had treated her so unkindly, but, glory to Allah! he found her more beautiful than he had dreamt possible.

Some evil spirit seized him, and he could only think that some other man had kissed her on those ripe young lips and held her in passionate embrace, and suddenly the very touch of her became odious to him. Drawing his hand from Émine's clinging fingers, he pushed her gently aside, and walked away, with his heart full of anger against fate, and a passionate unrest in his veins.

CHAPTER XIII

The day after her interview with Ibrahim, Éminé felt restless and undecided what to do, for she knew of no one in whom she could confide the renewed threats he had uttered against Noureddin.

Since the death of his daughter, Cheik-ul-Islam grew every day weaker, passing all his days in prayer and fasting; whilst his sister, Adevie-hanem, lived in a constant state of anxiety at the increasing expenses and diminishing income. She thought that she foresaw the ultimate ruin of her brother, and the greater part of her day

was spent in half-comic, half-tragic interviews with the steward, who had resigned himself to the fact that it was only occasionally that he could rob her with impunity.

Éminé determined to seek out Noureddin in his room late one evening, when the harem should be asleep. She listened for a long time to the heavy footsteps of the negresses, as they finished their household duties in the lower part of the building. One of them, having noticed the light in Éminé's room, came and asked her if she were unwell, adding that the Pacha alone was awake at that hour, which was her way of telling Éminé that it was extremely late. When she had gone, Éminé put out her light, and with wide-open eyes waited till she thought that all the slaves would

be asleep; then going towards Noureddin's room, she lifted the golden *portière*, which a light wind swelled in and out like the breast of a sleeping woman.

She stood motionless trying to read his inmost mind, but his face, full of anxious thoughts, and set with a slight frown, told her nothing. He was leaning back on his divan, one leg bent under him, with a cigar between his lips, reading with great attention some closely-printed German writing.

Suddenly he lifted his eyes, and looked at her in astonishment. For an instant he seemed undecided, and then, with a quick movement, he let fall his eye-glass, and throwing his cigar through the window that opened into the garden, he rose and went towards her with a sweet caressing

smile. He drew her to the divan and begged her to sit down.

He was secretly uneasy at her coming to him like that, as it was entirely contrary to the customs of Turkish life, but his face only expressed the man who was ready to listen to the words of the woman he loved.

"Look," said Éminé, "at that cypress in front of your window; see how it points straight to heaven like a minaret. Do you understand my soul! what it teaches you? It is the emblem of Islam."

"It seems to me that we are going to have a very serious conversation," he said lightly in French, with a frivolous air of a pleasure-seeking Parisian.

He again took her hand and kissed it; then putting up his eye-glass, he gazed at

her with such a look of intense admiration that she hung her head.

"I also," she said, "I know how to talk in that frivolous way. Mademoiselle de Mericourt taught me how to avoid serious questions by talking nonsense. But please allow me to tell you what I have to say in Turkish—as well as I can. Noureddin Pacha,"—and she paused for a moment as if the weight of what was on her mind was too heavy for her to bear,—"your plot is discovered, and who knows, perhaps even to-morrow you may be denounced; you know what punishment would be in store for you."

She looked at him. All light had gone out of his face. He shut his eyes and became deadly pale. He never moved, and scarcely seemed to breathe through his trembling lips.

Then she felt the certainty that he was guilty, and she whispered quickly, breathlessly, as if she were an accomplice: "His Majesty knows nothing—yet. You may save yourself."

He looked at her with his lifeless eyes. Rising, she moved off a few steps, standing erect between the two immense gold chandeliers in which were burning yellow waxen torches. Their flickering flames threw a wonderful light into her eyes and on her orange-coloured draperies that hung in heavy folds to the ground. Her dazzling white arms lay inert against her sides, and no unstudied attitude and grace could so well have expressed the unhappy and bitter weariness that had penetrated her heart. In that moment of profound misery she asked of God what sin in her

life had condemned her to the punishment of having loved two men unworthy of being Musulmen. She felt that to save one she loved to-day, she was ready to sell bits of her own body to the men who, in the evening, sold the cut-up flesh of lambs in the streets.

Hiding her face in her hands, she trembled when she thought of the sort of death that was awaiting Noureddin. Then throwing away her fears of the terrible thing that seemed to hang over both of them, she smiled at him, whilst a cry like that of a wounded bird escaping, came from her pale lips.

She swayed slightly, and he, springing forwards, took her in his arms, and laid her almost unconscious on the bed, where she lay like a beautiful lily placed on the steps of a sacred altar.

The Musulman sense of decency was not dead in him, and over her feet he laid the folds of orange silk that floated round her as she lay there almost fainting, like a carved recumbent figure on a Christian tomb.

Then he turned to the window and looked in silence out into the heavy-scented brooding night. Glancing round presently, he saw her eyes were open, and leaning towards her he said, "I was afraid a little while ago—I was afraid of the horrible and cruel death which perhaps must yet come to me. You must think badly of me, but I must own that I fear exile and moral tortures. Can the bravest of men speak openly about the gospel of revolutionary ideas? How can the idea of freedom reach the hearth of those that sleep in ignorance

if their watchful guardians are warned. You know well, that one cannot fight His Majesty on equal terms. For God's sake do not accuse me of cowardice; it would break my heart. For a long time past my nights are broken with frightful dreams, and when I wake to the day I see nothing but the sad things of life, that would make one die like a carrier under immense weights; which crush the body but leave the spirit free. Try and understand that if for a time my ideas and plans sow disorder, out of the storm and wreck liberty for all will be born. Is it possible, that for all time men shall bend like a cursed flock under the yoke to sovereigns who pretend that they are bound to God with a sacred oath, so that they can the easier terrorize generation after generation of these wretched

people who bend before them in a bloody sweat ?"

He stopped for a moment breathless, and skaking with emotion, wiping the perspiration from his forehead.

"The worst part of it, and the most cruel," said Émine, gently, "is, that you are the son-in-law of Cheik-ul-Islam, and that you take his hospitality so as to shelter yourself the more completely from suspicion. I find that cowardly and hypocritical."

Noureddin quivered as if he had been struck, and for a moment a look of terrible anguish passed over her face.

"I understand," he said, bravely. "I acknowledge that in that I am to blame, but I am fond of my father-in-law with real affection, and in his failing health

how can I pain him by refusing the one thing he begs of me—namely, to live with him?"

"Never mind—you are a stranger to us, Noureddin. Your heart does not understand ours; you are like some deadly plant cultivated in a Christian capital and transplanted into a beautiful field of wheat, which by the next harvest you will have devastated. Alas! it is necessary that the hand of the labourer should root you up, and throw you far away on to the high road, where the passers-by shall trample on you, not even recognizing you."

He answered half under his breath like a child who begs an angel to change his tears into flowers: "Give me your lips—for the words that come from them are too cruel."

She tried to resist him as he leant over her, and pushed him back with all her strength. Suddenly she pressed her lips to his and put her arms about his neck. They looked at each other in silence, and he asked her, "From whom do you get your information about me, and what I do?"

She, who had just lost her soul for this man, suddenly drew herself back with a shiver, as if she had awakened to find herself in a tomb, and with her eyes on his, she said, in a strangely monotonous voice: "It is useless to ask me that, for I shall never tell you the name of the person who has accused you to me."

"But you are mad to wish to hide it from me. How can I defend myself or rid me of my enemy who tells you that he has not yet betrayed me?"

"No—no," she said, "he is incapable of playing the spy. He will kill you, perhaps, but he will not betray your secret." "Noureddin," she added with her low sweet voice, laying her little hand on his shoulder, "I love you with my body and soul, and I cannot but help admiring you, for you are convinced of the justice of your beliefs—but listen to me. For God's sake leave this house to-morrow, go to Stamboul and keep a watch upon your words. Above all, destroy quickly all your papers that are in the Selamléc. Then if you cease spreading your revolutionary ideas, I swear to you your life will be saved."

"Ah!" he said, gently, stooping and kissing her again, "this is all the more complicated by your refusing to tell me

the name of the man who denounces me. When I think that two of my dearest friends will be compromised with me, it is terrible. I will go this moment and destroy all my papers in the Selamléc. Stay here; I shall be back before daylight; you will be able to return to your rooms without having been seen. Do not leave my room, I beseech you, and think well how imprudent it is to hide the name of my enemy from me."

Buttoning his tunic, with all the care of an officer who is going on parade, and walking with military stiffness, he left the room, going in the direction of the Selamléc.

CHAPTER XIV

When he had gone, Éminé went to the open window. A passion flower climbed and twisted in a thousand wreaths round the marble columns, and she drew a cluster of mauve blossoms and held them against her burning face.

Once again the joy of loving enthralled her, and a little weary with such keen emotions, though happy in a sense that life and the interests of life had come back to her, she lay down on the bed. Hardly had she stretched out her lithe young form when love and all that made love beautiful

seemed to mount in swelling waves round her, and her eyelids drooped under the influence of the waking dream. Then pulling the gauze curtains close, like a tired child she drifted into sleep.

She had scarcely slept when the most horrible dream assailed her. She held in her hands the bloody head of Noureddin, that the Sultan had decapitated, and her screams were stifled by some fearful weight at her heart.

Waking in an agony of terror, she sat up, saying half aloud over and over again, "*Bis millah*" (In the name of God), to drive away the terrible vision. Then taking the long masses of her beautiful hair, she twisted it round the top of her head, fastening it with the diamond pins that lay scattered over the pillows.

Some slight noise behind her made her turn, and through the curtains of the bed she saw a man climb in through the window. In one of his hands was a trail of passion flowers, in the other, two gleaming short swords. He looked round him, then walked straight to the bedside, and said in a low, clear voice, "Noureddin Pacha—Noureddin Pacha—the time has come. Your soul of an atheist must return to hell, whence it came; I have two swords with me, and one of us must kill the other. I do not wish to assassinate you, so we will fight."

If Émine's heart died within her, her brain at least remained clear, and remembering the laws of decency, and those divine, which forbid men to look at a woman entirely nude, or to touch her, she

quickly stripped off her garments, and opening widely the gauze curtains, stood there in all her magnificent beauty.[1]

The man stood still, gazing at the apparition, and then turned his head away, remaining motionless, whilst Éminé spoke.

"In my trouble I neither recognized your voice or face, Ibrahim, and yet my heart should have warned me that you alone were capable, like a thief in the night, to propose fighting with an undefended man. You are wrong; this is not Nour-

[1] Turks have a respectful fear of feminine nudity, and so great is it, that during a famous insurrection in Bosnia all the soldiers rushed to the tent of Nedjib Pacha to kill him, and his wife (whom I know), remembering this feeling, pulled open the *portière* of the tent and stood there nude before them. Immediately ashamed, they ran away, and the Pacha was saved. Madame Nedjib Pacha used to fight beside her husband dressed as a man. Nedjib ultimately died whilst ambassador at Madrid.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

eddin's room, it is mine. Besides, he is not the man to hide himself; you could kill him in broad daylight on the roads lit by the glory of the sun. You could hide behind a wall or tree, then spring on him and murder him. How do I know? I have not your mind, oh miserable and vile one. See how you tremble; no wonder you hang your head with shame. Even to-night, when the flowers sleep in darkness under the pale stars, you are ready to trample over the naked body of the woman you love to accomplish the death of Noureddin; for whilst a breath is left in my breast, to which you dare not lift your eyes, I will protect him against your hatred."

"You are mistaken," he said, sullenly. "Many a long and sad day has passed since I loved your body. What makes me

tremble is the cruelty that your heart showed mine, and my resolution is stronger than human considerations. If I am obliged to walk over your body, Éminé, over your heart, I will do it, if necessary to exterminate the man who seeks to kill belief in God."

She stretched out her arms to him, and cried in a faint voice, "Ibrahim, I implore you. Do you remember nothing of our happy youth? Were your lips never against mine? Did my fingers not press down your eyelids so that I might kiss them the longer? Were you not the essence of my life, Ibrahim? pupil of my eyes, sweet dream of my childhood? Why have you become now a man who commits the sacrilege of entering the harem of Cheik-ul-Islam like a thief at night, with

swords in your hand? *Aman Effendim*, I entreat you, leave this room, fly from here."

She moved towards him, standing between the great gold chandeliers with their flaming yellow wax. So close to him she stood that he almost felt the warmth of that wonderful body, gleaming like satin in the flickering lights.

In a weak broken voice he murmured, "They are lost words that fall from your lips, they lose their way, and do not reach my heart."

Forgetting that she was uncovered, he turned his head to meet her eyes, but saw only the dazzling beauty of her skin, which he had pictured to himself stained with the kisses of Osman. But how beautiful it was —how beautiful; surely like that of those

mystical creatures he had heard of, that, in dim paths, in green woods at the other side of the world, step out as radiant visions of love to meet the arms of travellers.

Slowly the blood mounted to his head, till the veins in his temples swelled and beat fiercely. Suddenly he dropped on his knees, pressing his cheek closely to her, with thick short sobs. Then looking up to her face, the current of his love seemed to flow all over her, and he pressed her in his strong arms.

Some mysterious life seemed to spring into existence in her heart. It felt as if Ibrahim's blood drew hers to him, that her very body was melting into a thousand particles and joining his.

Of their own accord her arms closed round that strong neck, and her eyes

drooped, though her whole nature seemed to rise and warn her of her sin.

He still sobbed, his head leaning against that body, which he saw white and pure above him.

Seized with a great pity for him, she drew him closer, pressing his forehead against her soft skin.

"Give up the idea of killing Noureddin," she said, in a trembling voice. "For the sake of your love for me, have pity."

Without moving his head, he answered, slowly, "I am no longer free. I am bound by my oath to a sect, which is formed to fight against the invasion of Musulman soil by the principles and morals of the Western people."

"Renounce it, Ibrahim, I implore you."

"*Aman!* peace," he went on, without meeting her eyes. "Do not speak; what do you wish me to say, when you stand here nude before me, and that to-morrow I must marry you?"

Ibrahim could not understand that it were possible, having thus seen a woman, that he should not marry her. At the thought of it he smiled, like a child who, knowing nothing of life, thought it meant happiness.

"*Allah, achekena*" (For God's sake), she said, breathlessly, again, "give up your hatred of Noureddin."

"A man never breaks the oath he has taken to God and his sovereign. All that your heart says through your lips will be without strength against my resolution. It is no longer your soul that

I love, it is your body, beautiful and white like a half-opened flower."

With the supple movement of a wild young animal in untrodden woods she stooped and picked up one of the swords that Ibrahim had let fall near him, and held it above her head.

He showered kisses on her soft flesh, and it seemed to Éminé, who was half fainting, that a wave of love was breaking magnificently over his whole being. Then with a sudden revolt, feeling that she no longer had power over him, she cried, "I shall kill you; Allah! I shall kill you."

He took no notice of her words, carried away by the sweetness of his passion.

She looked at him again, undecided,

and for the second time she felt herself swayed by passion, and trembled. Her eyes became fixed with a strange light. She saw nothing but the gloom beyond the burning lights.

"Renounce your oath, Ibrahim," she cried, huskily, between her teeth. "In the name of Allah, renounce."

"Be silent. If I am obliged to follow Noureddin to the feet of Cheik-ul-Islam, I will kill him."

"Allah il Allah," she cried, despairingly. "It is I who will kill you with this sword."

For the third time he would not listen, and only held her the more closely, turning his head back and closing his eyes.

She stooped and kissed his forehead—

the lingering kiss of farewell; then drawing herself up, the short, sharp sword crashed with a sickening noise into his head with a splash of blood.

With trembling, twitching fingers she wiped the blood and brains from her body, which clung to her like the kiss of the dying man. Then wrapping her long orange cloak round her, and taking a great wax torch from the gold stem, she walked away into the darkness of the harem.

Having awakened the Hanem-effendi, she told her of her horrible act, and, taking her by the hand, led her back to the presence of the dead.

CHAPTER XV

For some time the two women remained impassive and silent, then sitting down in the Oriental fashion, they took the thoughtful attitude that their race takes in the presence of the dead.

The torches with a soft light illuminated the room like some sacred place that was wrapped in silence.

Éminé humbly begged her mother to help her to drag Ibrahim's body into the garden of the harem.

The Hanem-effendi sighed deeply, and with her hands laden with rings, like a

precious mummy, wiped away the tears that ran slowly down her cheeks.

Wrapped in her *intari*, woven of the delicate grey wool from Thibet lambs, she looked like a being covered with the fine ashes of burnt wood, which the slightest breath of wind would scatter into clouds.

She made no movement, but said: "I am too old to help you to carry the body of that young bull."

Éminé bowed her head, shivering, and passed her hands over her eyes, then drew the folds of her cloak across her breast, looking with cold inscrutable face on the blood which stained the delicate gilded matting like a group of scarlet poppies in wheat fields. Suddenly she decided to carry the body into some dark place. She tried to drag it towards her, but her vain efforts made

her tremble violently. The Hanem-effendi saw her anguish, and calling on Allah to help her, went to her daughter's assistance. With a terrible and supreme effort, between them they drew the dead body to the entrance of the garden. Out in the soft night air, under the light of the pale stars, stricken with the feeling of nature's profound peace, Éminé leant her head against the wall of the harem and burst into a storm of sobs, which she vainly tried to stifle by putting the folds of her cloak to her mouth.

Her mother, without attempting to say anything either of reproach or consolation, sat in silence at the feet of the dead, sitting calmly with her garments gathered close around her in a state of apparent stupor.

When their strength returned, they dragged the body still further into the garden, under the shadow of a jasmine tree in full blossom.

There they watched in silence till daylight came, when they saw that the eyes of the dead were still wide open with a look of love in them, whilst the falling jasmine bloom had sown their white flowers over him.

Then their grief awoke in them, and their piercing cries roused the sleeping slaves.

CHAPTER XVI

A NEW spring had brought a soft joy to the earth; and everywhere the flowers were opening in that pale green land where the children and women were picking them with happy and careless cries.

Encumbered with their draperies, which they held up, they ran hither and thither, their dark eyes brilliant with delight as they fell amongst the flowers with shouts and laughter in the warm spring sun which flooded the hill of Anatolou-Hissar.

In the midst of all this, Éminé alone seemed indifferent and sad.

For two years she had been married to Noureddin. He was still in love with her beauty and charm, and surrounded her with every care and affection; but a sort of despair seized him on seeing her constantly plunged in sadness that nothing could dispel.

She loved him passionately, though never forgetting the past, and felt that the white flower of her heart had been watered with the blood of Ibrahim, and that her existence would always be haunted with bloody visions. She was constantly seeing that terrible red stain on the golden matting.

Noureddin always hoped that time and his affection would efface that horrible remembrance which was ruining the health of his wife and their happiness.

One evening, tired after a long day spent

with the minister of war, he came home by the last boat, and he found her standing and waiting for him, with an attempt at looking pleased to see him; but her sad eyes were a contradiction to the smile on her lips, and a sort of shyness was springing up between them.

Another time he came home later than usual. He had been obliged to pass through the Kassem-pacha quarter of Stamboul, and the women in the street had shouted things after him, as was their custom. The women of that quarter have always had, and still have, the right to make fun of people passing, and take full advantage of that unwritten law when they see government officials—plucking at their beards or clothes, hustling them, telling them home truths, and shouting out

political advice to them. What they say sometimes proves their intelligence, but the words they use are often embarrassing.

Tired with a long day, and irritated with these and other vexations, he remained silent when his wife asked his permission to go and establish herself in the summer kiosque, so that she might often pray at the tomb of Ibrahim, who had been buried in the cemetery of the monastery.

He felt a spasm of jealousy, but, uneasy at the state of her health, he gave her permission. He knew that it would be impossible for him to accompany his wife, as the preparations for the Turkish and Greek war obliged him to go daily to the War Office. So to see Éminé regularly he would be obliged to go up and dine with her, and then descend to sleep at his

father-in-law's house, so as to be able to catch the first boat in the morning for Stamboul.

All this worried him and made him anxious, but he would not show it, and gave his orders for the moving and settling of his wife at the summer kiosque. On her arrival, Éminé, followed by her servants, betook her towards the cemetery.

She watched the hill-folk running past on their way to the village, with their feet bound with linen and pieces of goat skin, hurriedly choosing their way so as not to slip in the descent, whilst stones dislodged by their hastening steps rolled echoing down the hill. These men, bent under the weight of their baskets of strawberries, which were slung on long poles across their shoulders, passed with their faces set with

anxiety lest they should make a false step. Drops of sweat fell from them, and shone for a moment in the sun, and then faded into confused stains on the stones which paved the road to Anatolou-Hissar.

In the cemetery a group of women and children sat amongst the tombs, wearing green or white turbans, and contemplated the Bosphorus in silence. A little further off, in a sheltered corner, a few were grouped round a fire that they had lit to heat the food they had brought with them in baskets.

The daylight was waning, and the hour was near when shadows would lie on the earth. The mothers, drawing the small children to them, rocked them slowly in their arms, so as to carry them home

asleep, and sang softly, with their eyes fixed on the graves.

One of them, uncovering her breast, pressed an infant's face to it who sucked greedily, whilst the mother smiled happily to herself in the midst of this empire of the dead.

Éminé entered the cemetery, making a sign to her servants not to follow her, and passing the group of women, who were hastening to pack their baskets so that they might get home before daylight had fled, gravely returned their salutations.

With slow and uncertain steps, she stooped and plucked the scarlet poppies that grew beside the graves, picking them vaguely to pieces, leaving behind her a trail of scarlet stains in the pale green grass. Near Ibrahim's grave dark cypresses stood

solemn and mysterious in the pure still air, and a soft wave of sound crept up from the plain to whisper and die at the feet of the dead.

She looked round her and noticed the blood-red petals she had scattered in her path. She pressed her two hands to her trembling heart, took a few steps forward from the shade of the cypresses, and was suddenly bathed in the purple light of the setting sun.

Sinking on the soft grass, that grew like a shadow round the grave, she drew aside her veil, and leaning her chin on her hand, she watched the sun sinking slowly—slowly below the earth.

Crying as only women can cry who have suffered for a long time, she let the heavy tears fall, nor tried to wipe them away.

In her grief she pretended not to see Leila, who was coming towards her, but the courtesan bent down, took her hand and kissed it, saying, "Ah! my gentle lamb, do not cry. Give your heart time; and courage will come back. Rest your soul, which is worn out with tears; and let me cover your head with some of your cloak, for your sobs will soon destroy the beauty of the silence."

Both sat for some time without speaking, for silence unites spirits better than useless words.

Later, when Leila was leaving the cemetery to sing her love songs among the ruins, they talked together simply and familiarly with gentle far-off voices. The shadows on the ground rose and crept up to the heavens, covering the world in a soft veil, pale and mysterious.

"In the darkness the illustrious strangers will soon come," said Leila, gravely, settling her *feradjé* round her shoulders and gliding noiselessly away.

Moving with swift, silent steps, her face shone with the ecstatic gaze of one who knew she had to fulfil a mission. With her —the mission was love.

With her eyes seeking to penetrate the shadows that the cypress wood threw, she fled with her face slightly forwards, whilst the soft air felt like an embrace on her forehead and little curved red lips.

When she reached the ruined wall she crept upwards from stone to stone, till she reached the summit, where she stood erect and silent, breathless from her haste. Then with her pure calm voice she sang aloud her call. Her face uncovered and turned to

the clear pale moonlight that crept over the trees, she saw not far from her, under the shadow of a pine tree, a man who really did look like one of the illustrious ones of the earth.

Smiling, she moved down to the deep shadow, where love could live and die softly, where no eyes could see.

"Doubtless the gold which covers your breast is the sign of your greatness," she said, looking at Noureddin's uniform.

Irritated at finding that his wife had gone the first day of her arrival to the cemetery, he had come to seek her. Without answering he emptied his purse on Leila's knees, excusing himself for not having more to offer her.

"What women, then, have you known, that you are ignorant of the price?" she

asked in a dreamy voice. "What money, what a sum—praise be to Allah."

"For what I have given you, I am more than repaid by the pleasure of knowing you."

"Since you are so rich, whilst others are so poor, take all this to the monastery that you see over there, and give it to the saintly dervish Saadetdin, who lives there. He will change the gold into soup for those who are hungry. For me, give me one kiss with your lips, scented like those of a Sultan, and if your love is rekindled at the touch of mine, place a silver coin on my forehead. That will be sign enough of your gratitude."

Noureddin still sat on the grass near her, nor did he think of leaving her, for he found a great charm in looking at the wonderful beauty of the girl, that by the

merest accident had entered into his life at the moment when he was hurt and sore at the coldness of his wife. Even if it had not been so with him, he felt now how impossible it would be to turn away from her.

Without pausing to look into his heart, he said simply, "It is my destiny."

He rose, and kissing her gently, added, "I will return to-morrow, Leila."

CHAPTER XVII

During the long hours that Éminé passed in walking about the immense domain she often met Leila, and many times she had tried to lead her to another life. But she remained firm to her first teaching, and no reasoning or persuasion could conquer her resolution. Éminé had no longer the excuse of saying to herself that she hoped to convert her. And their conversations, owing to Leila's refusal to change her mode of life, became a thing unheard of according to the custom of the country. So she decided to have one last

interview with the poor girl and to attempt the impossible, of bringing her to what she considered a worthy life. At her first words Leila turned proudly towards her and said:

"You also, perhaps, would teach me to read, that I might be able to repeat like you, words that have so often been used. You would bind my body and my lips, would deprive me of all liberty to live according to the teaching of the earth. Love has never been born in your heart, and perhaps you do not know that Mahomet has said, 'Have pity one for another.' I know well, if you and those like you were courtesans, only the rich would see the beauty of your bodies. Then rings encrusted with rubies that burn like tigers' eyes would cover your hands. I—

I watch by night the illustrious passers-by who look sad. I know well that they are not illustrious, but the teaching says they must be treated as if they were, for it offers some consolation for their misery ; and I offer them my beauty, which is great."

Éminé hid her face in her thin transparent fingers during this speech, but when Leila paused she said, "Alas! you only fill your mind with immodest ideas. Do not speak of them, I beg you—be silent." Then she turned her head wearily away.

Leila, not understanding what was passing in her mind, thought that the interview had lasted long enough, and was moving away when Éminé called her.

The girl turned and spoke sadly, yet looking with tenderness at Éminé.

"I am going—I am going, and I shall

never see you again, for you are ashamed of me, and it hurts me. The grass already grows as thick as my hair on the path that leads from your heart to mine. Like all the rich ones of the earth, you are selfish; you will only give your friendship on condition that I think and speak like you. Your eyes see only evil things, and you are angry because mine look only on beautiful ones. I love you, but—the teaching, is the teaching. You hold to your fine ideas, and I to mine. I bid you farewell, Éminé-hanem."

She bent in a profound bow.

"Come here," said Éminé, in a hard voice. "Obey me."

Leila placed her bundle on the ground, and came close, standing in a respectful attitude.

Then Éminé, drawing her to her side, put her arm round her neck and kissed her, murmuring, "My sister, my sister."

"I know," said the girl, with tears running down her cheeks, "that you have often spoken of the remorse that I shall suffer for not having done what you told me, but I think that is a useless sentiment. If ever I may do a bad action, I shall put it behind me, and occupy myself with good deeds that I may find the opportunity of doing. For it is thus that one really repairs one's faults, and not by shutting oneself up and counting the sighs of one's heart. Also your knowledge about useless things like the size of the world or the depths of the sea, makes me unhappy; Whilst you know so little of life as the earth gives it. You know only of the dead things that are

gone, not of the living things of the present."

Éminé wished to get up, but kneeling before her, the woman of the hill put her arms round her feet, holding her closely, and saying, "Wait; there is one thing that I hide from you; my soul is torn in two. For some days I believe I no longer love all men, but a stranger who comes every evening to pass an hour with me. He attracts me with the power of a royal lion; he showers gold on me, and when his lips are pressed to mine, I feel ready to die of happiness. His words I do not always understand, they are too great for me. I have shown him the sweetness of love, and I fear I shall yield to his prayers. He begs me to live for him only, in a house he has prepared. Like you, he wished to steal my

liberty. See," she added, taking a photograph from her breast, "look how beautiful he is."

With a sudden shyness Éminé placed the picture on her knees without looking at it, and gazed out into the skies, watching the calm even flight of some bird of prey. Presently she withdrew her eyes, so dazzled with the clear light of the sky that, looking down at the photograph, for a moment or two she could see nothing.

Then her heart beat so violently that she almost cried out in pain, and the blood rushed to her face, staining even her eyelids crimson. She rose and stood for a moment erect, with eyes that seemed already dead, then, staggering and swaying like a cypress struck by lightning, she threw her hands above her head with a gesture of absolute

despair and started running like a wild animal through the trees.

She fled towards a disused quarry. Leila was conscious of some invisible and terrible danger. In her terror she looked at her feet, expecting to see that long thing which you must never call a serpent, for it would immediately attack you. Soon she grew calm, and understanding the fearful death that awaited Éminé in the direction she was running, she gave utterance to the shrill cry that shepherds use when they wish to turn a flock, and darted in pursuit. She ran with surprising quickness ; the light wind, beating on her temples, seemed to dance round her with the madness of those mystic creatures who whirl in the moonlight. Her turban unwound itself and floated out behind her like the green flames of a torch.

In her own way she loved Éminé, and wished to save her life, for to her life itself seemed more beautiful than any of the wonderful tales told by the professional story-tellers. Shivering with horror as she ran, she knew that if she could not stop Éminé in her wild flight it would be only a dead inert body that she would pick up, its white loveliness torn and stained, with broken bones and blood. Determined to stop her, she saw her only chance was to jump a wall (that Éminé was avoiding by going round) and thus cut her off. Crying aloud, "*Allah il Allah*," as soldiers do when charging, she sprang into the air. She fell into long grass, and on her face and hands fell the dewy leaves, whilst a rose bush tore her skin. Rising with difficulty, a stream of blood

ran down over her eyes, like the soft rain of April.

Through this she saw Éminé flying towards her, and measuring her distance with calmness, she dashed at her, throwing her strong young arms round her and bearing her to the ground. Then, as shepherds do with unmanageable animals, she threw herself on her, weary and breathless. A few yards off the quarry lay, wide open to the golden sun.

Leila was suffocating; each breath seemed to tear her throat. Hastily and with shaking hands she undid her yellow leather stays, opening wide her soft gauze chemise. With quivering open lips and dilated nostrils she looked fixedly with staring eyes in front of her, unconsciously putting her hand to her face and wiping away the blood

that trickled down her cheeks. Her wound was nothing, of that she was sure, nor did she give it a thought; but a dull anger rose in her heart against Éminé. She tried to give utterance to it in words of an educated person, but her feelings were too strong for her, and she cried out fiercely, "*Bok! Bok!* for the Giaours."

Nothing could be more coarse and horrible than that expression that she hissed out. She was ashamed of herself, but could not check her furious words, which tumbled breathlessly over one another from her parched lips. "You wished to lead me to what you called good, whilst you, yourself, were ready to commit the most abominable act. You were ready to kill yourself, as the Giaours do in their country. Begin by leaving your own sins behind before you

meddle with mine. How miserable and undignified are such violent deeds—curses on the writings of the Giaours who debase the minds of women. You wear dresses from Paris, but under them your heart is empty. Dogs and sons of dogs, are those Christians."

She knew a mass of dreadful expressions, but somehow at that moment they failed to rise to her stuttering lips, as also failed her poetic ideas; and having hurled one dreadful sentence that expressed all sorts of horrors, she was silent, hoping that once and for all she had crushed Christianity.

Then she stood up and looked at Éminé, who was crying silently—hopelessly.

A great pity and tenderness filled her eyes and heart at the sight of those tears, and stooping down, she murmured, "What

is it, child? tell me. It is those books that you remember?"

From the wound torn on her forehead by the wild rose bush the blood was flowing in slow, heavy drops. One fell on her yellow shoe. She looked at it for a moment with an expression of pain on her face, and said aloud, "*Aman!* I forgot to take them off before running—they are ruined." She drew them off and carefully wiped them with a fine handkerchief, with a sigh of resignation.

Éminé looked up at that moment and recognzied the handkerchief as one of a set her husband, lately, had had sent him from Paris. She uttered a sad little cry and half rose, but Leila held her firmly by the arm, saying solemnly, "I believe a European devil has entered into you—perhaps you

would do well to go and purify yourself at the tomb of the prophet."

Éminé remained silent, unwilling to let this child of the people see that she was the involuntary cause of her despair. Her kindness and pride both revolted at what would be the act of a vulgar-minded woman. Her heart seemed to sink for ever within her. She felt dried up, like the bed of a river that an earthquake had emptied, and driven into another channel. Everything was over—she no longer wished to live.

"Get on my back, so that I may carry you towards your home, for you are weak as a child," said Leila, who was watching her with rather a farouche look. "For the first time I regret not being rich; for if I were, I would have you followed, to

find out what is your grief, so that I might console you."

She carried Éminé to the turn of the road, through the darkness, in silence, when Hassan-agha suddenly appeared before them. "God be praised," he cried. "Our glorious Sultan Abdul Hamid has just ordered his invincible army to march against the Greeks."

Leila placed Éminé on the ground. They looked in each other's eyes, and a strong patriotic feeling rose in both their hearts, and with one voice they cried aloud, "*Anim*" (So be it).

Then in front of them they saw Mahommed, pretending as usual to cut off imaginary heads with a sword. The spirit excited in him by the warlike men of his surroundings burnt fiercely in his boyish

eyes, and he whirled his little sword in the air, and the heads of the narcissi of the fields flew round him on the ground, falling heavily like human beings deprived of life. Hassan-agha looked at him with his eyes full of tears, so great was his pride in having brought him up. Turning towards Leila he said, "Woman, be happy, we will take your son to the war."

Then she, proud as she was, began to cry before the old shepherd, who, as a sign of his pity for her, kissed her shoulders.

CHAPTER XVIII

They were obliged to move Éminé to her uncle's house, for she was ill. When questioned by her mother, she replied that she had gone out in the sun without an umbrella, and that she must have received a slight stroke. She made up her mind to ask her uncle's advice, but did not allow further questions to be put to her.

When her husband, on the point of leaving for Thessaly, and much upset by her appearance, tried to find out from her the cause of her sudden collapse, she answered as she had to her mother.

She took great trouble in directing the slaves who were preparing the clothes and the thousand and one things which the general would want during the campaign. Her mother, secretly, was very uneasy about her daughter's state, and noticed in her a firmness and decision which was new to her. But the anxieties connected with the harem and the cares of the property absorbed all her powers.

One afternoon, wrapped in a long trailing garment of black embroidered with gold, and on her forehead a heavy band of rubies, Éminé waited for her uncle in the great hall of prayers. She had already confided her unhappy secret to him. Obliged to go to the Selamléc, where an envoy from the Sultan awaited him, he had promised her to return to the harem as soon as he was free.

Presently she heard a light step on the white marble floor, which was smooth and semi-transparent, from age and use. The old man glided in like an apparition from some distant country that was covered with snow. He passed her, throwing her a look of ineffable tenderness; and she followed him to his room which seemed full of soft shadows, and then waited for him to speak first.

"In my heart beats the same blood as in yours, and your grief is mine," he said, gently.

"And yet," said Éminé, in a faint whisper, "Noureddin loved me."

He turned away his head so as not to see the look of anguish in her eyes, in which he thought he already saw the death wound.

"Do not complain, my child," he said tenderly, "do not forget that you killed the one man who really loved you."

She raised her head, her great silk covering falling round her like the sacred carpet at the foot of the prophet's tomb. And standing there, deadly pale in her purple silk, of which the sheen cast a red glow on the whiteness of her neck, she murmured, covering her face with her almost transparent hands, "I killed him to save the man I loved, and his blood is on me."

Then suddenly frightened, like a child in the dark, she cried, "My father—my father!"

He put his arms round her.

"I regret my life—I regret my sins," she added.

"My child," he interrupted, gravely, "regret is a pale flower, which springs to life only on ruins. You understand now The two men that you have loved preferred the children of the people. The feminine instinct in those women is the sole guide of their existence; from that, perhaps, comes the indefinable and irresistible charm which captivates men. From over-educating herself a woman loses her right, or power to compel love. I am obliged to lay before you the exact truth. Ibrahim lived entirely for his faith, for his sovereign, and for you. You thrust him into the dim valleys of death, which he passed through, murmuring your name."

He paused for a moment, looking at her sadly, tenderly; and added, "Go as the poor go, travel as they travel, on a pil-

grimage to Mecca, and prostrate yourself at the tomb of our sacred prophet."

"Ah! spare me," cried Éminé, overcome with the horror of seeing with clear eyes her irreparable faults. "I feel myself cursed. How could I have ever dreamt of happiness without faith, or the beliefs of my race?"

She muttered a few more broken words, perhaps expressing what was still so dark a stain at her heart.

"As expiation for your sins, I command you, my child, to go to the tomb of the prophet; there a talisman will be given you which will render your husband invincible. As the head of your escort I will put the brother of your victim, Ali Bey, who has already made the pilgrimage three times. The warlike Fatima and two

of your servants will complete your guard as women."

Éminé would have spoken, but he said kindly but firmly, "Do not speak, my daughter: learn to be silent, and to accomplish in silence the duties of a good Musulwoman. Go to Mecca, to Hedjaz; pray for Islam, for your sovereign, and for your husband, who commands one of his armies—but, above all, pray for those who suffer—for Musulmen or Christians equally are worthy of pity. If you stay here, your reason would suffer. Here is a letter which you will hand to the Cheik Sadoullah, and he will give you the talisman which will protect your husband." Then he drew her to him and held her in a long embrace against his heart.

When she went out, she turned and

looked back at him with tears streaming from her eyes and falling on her thin clasped hands. In her face, though he said nothing, he thought he saw a long—perhaps an eternal, farewell.

CHAPTER XIX

Émine was to start the evening of the day before Noureddin was to leave for Thessaly.

The Cheik-ul-Islam had an answer ready to every objection that his son-in-law raised to her going, though he never revealed the real reason, judging that it was too serious a moment to tell him anything that might distract his thoughts from his military duties and arrangements; for the war with Greece had already commenced.

He only said that his niece's health was such that a long journey was necessary to rouse her from her profound sadness.

There seemed to be something evil abroad that day in the air; the clouds were low, yet flying grey and sullen like flocks of frightened animals, and heavy masses of them seemed to clutch at and hang on the tops of the tall cypress trees. Trails of creepers, broken by the wind, hung like torn masses of women's hair.

Éminé, leaving the harem, and clinging to her mother, walked to the great gate, where Ali Bey and his small escort waited in silence for her and her suite, whom they were to protect as far as Mecca.

"The carriages are there, and we must start in spite of the bad weather," Ali answered to the somewhat nervous questions of one of the slaves.

Filled with a presentiment that her body (that frail covering to a brave soul) would

not be able to stand the fatigues of the pilgrimage, Éminé clung closer and closer to her mother. Like a child she murmured broken sentences, to which the Hanem-effendi appeared to pay no attention.

"In a few minutes the heavens will dry their tears. Take courage, my child," she said, as she kissed her on the forehead, and pushed her gently to the open door.

Then turning her face to the slaves, who were calling down the blessings of Allah on her daughter, she said, "Éminé-hanem was the essence of my heart; but European civilization tore her from my influence to make her unhappy. Watch and guard well your children if fate should send you any."

For more than a week Leila had wandered round the house, trying to see Éminé. She had even found the courage to ask the

porter of the gate to the Selamlée whether it was true that she was going to Hedjaz.

"Get out of my sight—dog, and daughter of a dog," was the answer hurled at her. Since that moment she had remained sitting on a stone, not far from the door—waiting.

When she saw Éminé going towards the carriage she sprang to her feet, and turning the palm of her hand towards Stamboul, she cried aloud, "Do not go. Stay here, near us—come back with me to the hill where you will know the joy of life, where the air is scented. Come back, and, as before, our hearts will meet."

Ali Bey thought she was trying to insult the niece of Cheik-ul-Islam, and, scarlet with anger, he picked up a stone and threw it at her; full of shame that a woman of that

class should dare to speak to the lady that he was accompanying. "Go away, daughter of filth—is it snowing on the hill, that thus you come to the plain?" he cried.

But Éminé, laying her hand on his arm, said to him, "Cease, keep silence—she loves me, and perhaps for the second time would save my life."

Now that day (the eve of Noureddin's departure) there was a feeling of a great storm somewhere in the heavens. The ruins of the great wall, where the woman used to sit, fell still further down, crashing and echoing on the hills, and Leila was seized with a sudden fear.

All the men, and Mahommed her son, had gone as volunteers, without even waiting

that one of the generals should tell them what direction to take, to reach Thessaly. They trusted to their instinct to lead them to the field of battle, and started marching at dawn, having three times called the blessings of God on their heads. They passed proudly along, with their foreheads decorated with great bunches of roses. On seeing Leila following them, and crying to them words of admiration and encouragement, they stopped that she might kiss their hands. When she came close to Mahommed, she held up her head and fastened her eyes on him with an intense look of motherly affection, and was about to kiss him, but one of the men pushed her aside, saying brutally, "Woman."

She was seized with the temptation to cry out that she was his mother, but the

instinctive generosity of her nature softened her anger.

She remained silent, turning away her head to hide her suffering, for did she not belong to all of them?

From that moment she wandered on the hill, carrying her bundle of clothes in her hands. The flocks of sheep were feeding near where she sat, but the shepherd dared not kiss her, for there was a perpetual flight of blackbirds over their heads, which he interpreted as an evil omen.

Night fell without her having once given her lesson of love, and found her sitting silently beneath a tree listening to the vague mysterious whisperings of the earth.

Suddenly, a long way off, the sound of a horse galloping on the hard sunburnt

ground reached her, and grew nearer and nearer. With brilliant eyes she saw Noureddin dismount, and coming close to her, he took her in his arms.

It was the last evening.

He held her so close, that they could hear each other's heart beat, she crying and stifling the pain in her mind with the kisses that he showered on her lips.

"I implore you," he said, "to let me put you away from danger and poverty, in the house that I have had prepared for you. Sleep on the silken bed that awaits you. See, I am leaving for the war, and I love you as I have never cared for anyone."

She did not answer, but taking him by the hand she led him over the soft sweet-smelling grass, all bathed with the pale light of a young moon. The wild flowers

covered with dew shone like silver under its rays, as they brushed against them in the stillness of the night.

Then, with the soft clear voice with which she used to extol the beauty of her mission and teaching, she said, "The joys that I give to mankind are not those that require what you offer me. On God's own earth the power of love is greatest. My lips are as a well of love to quench the thirst of those that pass, and my eyes are calm waters in which they think they find the mystery of life. I know not, nor seek to know whom you are. Whatever you may be for others, I only care what you have become for me. That is all that concerns me; and I find you are perfect. I am grateful for your offers, which I do not accept. Go now to the war, as the other men have gone, and

later, if I should meet you again and see my face mirrored in your eyes, I shall know that you have not forgotten me. You will find me here waiting your coming."

CHAPTER XX

The mountains in Thessaly were bathed in sunshine under a clear dazzling blue sky; at their feet, on slightly rising ground, in the midst of almond trees covered with their white and pale rose-coloured blossom, the ruins of an old Greek convent stood like an emblem of a lost or forgotten faith.

Noureddin Pacha and his army were encamped there since dawn. Alone in his tent, he remained plunged in deep thought.

Since the beginning of this war against the Greeks the ideas of the young general had become greatly modified. He no longer

believed so firmly in the infallibility of the new principles he had hoped to instil into his country. The endurance, the simple gaiety, the profound belief, the resignation, and the virtue of the men that he had led to fight, astonished him like some revelation of another age.

Of all the theories which he had so dearly bought at the price of so many efforts to efface the first impression of his Musulman education, little was left to him, but a conviction that he had wasted his time.

Sitting on a folding chair before a table covered with plans and maps, he looked out through the opening of his tent on to the delicate sea of almond blossom that surrounded the sad grey convent. He was thinking of the death of his wife Éminé.

The day before a decisive battle, Ali Bey had rejoined him, telling him gently and sadly of the misfortune that had come to him.

"She died within sight of Mecca, and I did my best to lessen her sufferings," murmured Ali, with his eyes on the ground, that Noureddin should not see how great had been the loss to him. "I was alone with her, and Cheik Sadoullah authorized me to be present at his last interview with her. Her two slaves and Fatma only came near her after her death. She had signed to them to keep at some distance. I bring to your Excellency the talisman that Éminé-hanem confided to my care for you."

Noureddin looked at him almost haughtily, for he thought he heard a reproach in the

voice of the young officer who stood so respectfully before him.

"Thank you," he said, slowly, "you will remain attached to me as aide-de-camp. Your regiment is in my division. You may retire."

The next day, during the fighting, he was calm and engrossed with the military details of the attack; but when evening came, and he was alone, he seemed always to hear the sad accents of Ali Bey, and with deep sighs he acknowledged in his heart his regret at having married a woman who had appealed to the passionate side of his nature only, and whom he had so little really loved.

With his vigorous, active nature and mind, it was not in him to waste time for long over barren regrets, but in this case,

when his mind was not engrossed with affairs that required his profound attention, he found himself thinking often and deeply over the past. It was a relief to the strain of his anxiety and remembrance, and a very distinct pleasure, that he received almost every evening a visit from one of his former friends, a correspondent to a great Parisian paper, who led him away from his somewhat sad thoughts. This correspondent complained bitterly at finding himself still in Thessaly. He missed the pleasures of Paris, and said he found it impossible to live without the society of pretty women, and that for his part, the war had lasted quite long enough.

Noureddin let his eye-glass fall, and taking a cigar from a box half hidden in the maps and plans on the table, looked at his friend,

as if wondering what he would think of what he was going to say. He lit his cigar carefully and said: "My dear friend, the pleasures which you speak of, would have left a distinct impression on my mind if I had not met a wandering Turkish woman, who somehow inspired me with a great love. Of that love I am far from being healed. She told me she loved me according to her teaching, and that teaching has seemed to me so sweet, that life without her has become impossible. She is marvellously beautiful."

The correspondent was immediately interested, and drew his chair nearer to that of the general, who added, "I doubt whether your demi-mondaines have the power to give the complete joys of love."

"Ah! really—how do you mean?'

Suddenly, out in the clear air, a voice singing with its pure note, that sounded above the hum of the camp, rose up, saying, "You that are sad, come to me. You that are lonely, I have words that will make you forget your loneliness."

There was a pause, and the voice died away in ripples of sound. Noureddin started to his feet and left the tent, saying, with a voice harsh and unlike his own, to an aide-de-camp, "Bring that woman here. She is perhaps a spy. At least make her silent."

CHAPTER XXI

LEILA came in humbly like a child of the people, and bent to kiss Noureddin's hand, but he hastily drew back. Out of respect for his rank and position she ignored with admirable ease all that he had previously been to her.

"I have come to find Mahommed," she said, with a luminous smile, "for he has not returned to Anatolou-Hissar—and I am happy to look on you, great Pacha, of whose brave deeds all the women sing to their children as they rock them to sleep—throughout the empire of Islam. I beg you

to give orders that Mahommed may be told that I have come to know if all is well with him, and whether he will not return with me to the hills."

"Leave us," he said in French to the only aide-de-camp who was present, standing immovable in the tent.

"How had she reached Thessaly—who had brought her—how was it that she remained as beautiful as ever? Did she really come to see Mahommed—or was it to see him, Noureddin?"

All these questions he asked her, holding her close to him.

He kissed her eyes and lips, making her promise that the very next morning she would leave for Stamboul under the charge of an escort. Then he was silent, hesitating to ask her the one question

that had tormented him since she had arrived.

"I have come," she said gently, looking at him with tender sparkling eyes, "partly for you, and partly for Mahommed. I thought that as you were both fighting you would be together. I followed the irregular troops who were leaving to join your army. Four days have passed since I first lived in those ruins," pointing to the old convent walls, "and, glory to Allah, you all arrived this morning. Tell me, has Mahommed realized the hopes of those men?"

She looked at him anxiously, for all her mother's pride was bound up in the boy's warlike qualities.

Noureddin, who, under his appearance of the Europeanized Turk, still kept the instincts of his race, for the moment looked

like a Calife who had risen from the grave to watch his descendants conquer the Giaours.

He dropped his eye-glass, and in a loud clear voice, with a sound of triumph in it, that stirred the very heart of Leila, said, "Mahommed fought like a very lion, and it is to him that I have confided the care of the flag of Islam."

They looked at each other in silence, their hearts suddenly swollen with a tumult of patriotic ardour for their Musulman faith.

Presently she said, "The men told me on no account to sing, because they said the Pacha would put me in prison. But a secret voice said, 'Sing, because you are on the ruins of a Christian temple.' When they brought me to this tent, I recognized

you at once, though you have let your beard grow; but I did not wish to say loving words to you, because a Giaour and your great men were near you. You wish me to leave for Stamboul with an escort, doubtless to place me in your house. The rich man always seeks to carry off the only joys of the poor," she added, sadly. "My heart is an open book to you—do as you wish."

The next morning from break of day she was ready to start. No longer considering herself free, she had veiled herself, that no one should see her face. Noureddin saw and understood the action, and going close to her he took her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"There is a great sadness at my heart," she said, softly, "for four months ago

to-day I learnt of the death of a great lady—Éminé-hanem; she was good to me, and died at Hedjaz. I greatly loved her, and I confided to her my love for you. I even showed her your photograph. That day she had begun to be ill, and at the sight of it she suddenly became like some frightened mad animal."

Noureddin seized her hand, and with a trembling voice said, "Ah, God—what have you done—what have you done? Éminé-hanem was my wife."

She stood crushed under the weight of the fearful shock.

At last she saw all—she understood that she had been the involuntary cause of Éminé's death.

With a slow, sad movement she pushed Noureddin aside, saying, "You alone are

to blame; I knew nothing of your life. Now," she said, with her voice ringing and breaking with tears like a child's in the darkness, "that I know the truth, I will be nothing more to you than I am to all men."

So, with no other words, she left him, walking through the camp, passing the ruins of the old convent. She recognized Ali Bey, who had thrown a stone at her the morning of Éminé's departure, and paused and looked at him; but he, so absorbed by his own thoughts, did not remember her.

He was sitting in the midst of a group of soldiers, who, with attentive looks, were waiting to hear a tale. Ali Bey, their captain, was about to tell them a story for the good of their souls.

Overhead the almond trees were in full bloom, and now and then in the soft gentle air, which was almost a caress, the petals fell, all rose and white.

Some of the soldiers, watching their fall, without understanding why the sight of it touched them, felt a sort of tenderness for the delicacy and beauty of the blossom. They did not grasp that it was the contrast of repose and nature after the vivid, sterner moments they had passed in the wild delight of killing.

"Look, my lions," said Ali Bey, "at these beautiful flowers, and your hearts will open. Do you understand now how glorious a thing it is to die for Islam? It is for you, that God will reserve a flower-strewn paradise, where for ever you will live in happiness."

Ali Bey was a conscientious officer, who tried to accustom his men to the thought of death; and he added, "Before rendering your soul to God you must decapitate at least six of your enemies. We gained Stamboul by blood, and we will never give it up to Christian usurpers who defend only their interests, whilst we defend our faith."

At these words the soldiers shouted as with one voice, "Glory to God; may the Sultan live a thousand years."

One of the oldest among them said, "We listen. You have told us that you have a new story to tell us since your return from Hedjaz. For four years, as our captain, you have told us the story of the Sultana with golden hair, and that of the diamond which encloses a hair from the beard of

Mahomet. We are perfectly content with those; and do you not think that it would be useless to tell us another tale?"

"*Asker* (soldier)," said Ali Bey, "the story I am about to tell you is a sacred one and moves my heart. I am going to tell you of a great Turkish lady, of blessed memory, who died for her faith and for the love of her country. She went, at the command of Cheik-ul-Islam, to Hedjaz, to fetch a talisman, and it is thanks to that talisman that Noureddin Pacha, our general, has carried out successfully all his victories to which he led us. Listen; I will begin. In sight of Mecca, Émine-hanem was no longer strong enough to sit in her saddle. A long stretch of flat country covered with mauve and silver thistles lay out before us, reaching to the horizon. Émine-hanem

was dying. I took her in my arms, as you take a child, whose beautiful dream you do not wish to disturb. I laid her in the shade of a single olive tree, out of the sun, where I thought she would suffer less. Her body was almost dead—only her soul was still living. Her wonderful red, rust-coloured hair hung in heavy masses, and some few strands caught in the bark of the olive tree, which stood over her so strong and full of life, throwing a grey shadow the better to veil her death. Her eyelids were pale and transparent like the delicate skin of newly-hatched pelicans. The gold in her eyes shone through them, like lamps behind thin silk. Her dress of violet, such as only those can wear who have lived under three sovereigns, opened widely at the breast, which, though

thin, was still beautiful in its perfect lines."

"Effendim," interrupted the oldest soldier, "why did you not draw close with decency the robes of the great lady?"

The officer continued, without paying attention to that very just remark: "A little higher up, fastened by a yellow silk thread, was a folded parchment sewn in a covering of cashmere, embroidered with diamonds. Round her neck was a gold chain, and on it was a long pointed bit of amber, hanging down on her pale breast, which seemed to her like the weight of some terrible dream of death. She would have pushed aside this weight, which seemed to crush her, but instead of doing so she pressed this mysterious stone deep into her flesh."

"Effendim," again interrupted the soldier, "this story is on your brain, after the manner of the Giaours, and the body of this lady occupies your thoughts more than her soul does."

Ali Bey closed his eyes, and he grew pale, but calmly continued: "The wind blew lightly round her, and the heat of the sun drew a golden haze from the earth, and at a distance I sat and watched without thinking much about her death, for I loved her—not as men love. When from a distance I had seen the solitary olive tree, I had carried her there to its grey shadow, feeling that she could die there, my thoughts going no further. She was dying from weakness and fatigue, the long journey having killed her. Presently she said, 'Is the Cheik Sadoullah coming soon?' To

which I answered, 'Patience, my noble sister.' Once more she lifted her head and said, 'Death has no patience; look at the shadow on my face. Go on in advance and find the Cheik, whom you must bring to me on your horse; for should you try to lift me up and take me there, I should fall to dust. My body has been dead for days, it is only my soul that lives. In the name of Allah, go and fetch the Cheik. Obey me, for I will not die without fulfilling my promise of receiving the sacred amulet, which shall bring victory to our armies. If you refuse to obey my orders, you will be a traitor who deserts his God and his general.'

"Then I interrupted her, asking whether it was true that she had killed my

brother Ibrahim in the harem of the Cheik-ul-Islam.

"A faint blush rose to her face, and with superhuman energy, which had always lifted her spirit above the terrors of life, she said to me in a calm and majestic voice: 'Yes, I killed your brother — his blood and brains stained my face and hands. He was a traitor who would have killed his general, but he bent his head to help me in my work of justice. If you think that your blood refuses to leave you pure of the same stain, and that you should desert the cause of your chief and of my well-loved husband, give me your sword, that hangs at your waist, and with a hand that never trembles I will kill you also.'

"'*Machallah Yarabi!* (What God wishes,

O Allah !), and you are but a woman,' I cried, overcome with admiration. 'Oh, light of my eyes ! oh, lioness, magnificent in your grandeur—patience ; do not die, I obey you !'

"I think that for some time she listened to the noise of my horse's feet as I galloped towards the mosques of Mecca.

"When I returned, bringing the Cheik Sadoullah with me, she was dying slowly, with all the dignity worthy of the last act of her life. I placed the Cheik close to her. He held himself erect, wrapped in his white woollen caftans, soft and beautiful as those that covered the embalmed body of our prophet Mahomet. He was very old and nearly blind. Softly he passed his trembling hands over Éminé's face, saying, 'Speak, my

child; I know you, now that I have touched you.'

"Then with the faintest voice, like a tired whisper, she said, 'I have been sent by the Cheik-ul-Islam, and I bear with me his writing, which is addressed to you. It is fastened to my breast, that you see is oppressed and damp with the sweat of death. Thus my mission is accomplished. Waste not a moment of this hour, but write the sacred words of this talisman, which you alone know, and which will give victory to our armies. Give them to Ali Bey, who is standing here before my death-bed.' Then she turned her great sad weary eyes to me, saying, 'Ali Bey, captain of the first regiment, faithful to your oath taken to your sovereign; and chief, General Noureddin Pacha; you, who

know no weakness, I charge you bear to my well-loved husband the words written by the Cheik Sadoullah.'

"She was ready now to accept the death that was tearing her breast; she moved her head from side to side without intermission, and the rough thistles where she was lying pricked her cheeks and forehead. 'Cheik Sadoullah,' she murmured, 'I fear you neither hear my tired breath nor the agony that is at my soul, which is preparing to leave my body. Ah! how I suffer—I loved the warrior my husband—he let me go without regrets, to die far from him like worthless seed that the wind scatters over the plains.'

"'Die in peace,' said the Cheik, 'the sound of your voice and what I learnt by touching your face have told me all—

I understand your soul—you are the sublime love which men repulse, for they cannot understand it.'

"'I die,' she whispered, 'on the sacred earth of Hedjaz, within sight of Mecca, without having heard the voice of the muezzin.'

"The Cheïk, with his face bathed in tears, turned towards Mecca, and with his voice full of infinite tenderness, sang, '*Allah Ekber*' (God is great).

"At that moment a smile of wonderful repose lit up with marvellous beauty the face of Éminé-hanem, who, lifting her heavy eyelids, gazed slowly and sadly round on the earth, as one looks on some beautiful ship that passes in the night."

"*Amin*," said the soldiers quietly, who had listened with respect to the story of the captain.

"May God have Éminé-hanem in his keeping," said the deep voice of the oldest of them, who looked at Ali Bey with a glance of complete understanding, who still trembled from the anguish at his heart.

The other soldiers remained with bent heads waiting for permission to retire.

CHAPTER XXII

Leila, after a long journey from Thessaly, full of fatigues and privations, sitting on the ruins of her wall, was contemplating the Bosphorus. Some evil breeze seemed to have disturbed the harmony of things. No longer did she see the white sails gliding slowly past, no longer the silvery tracks on the shadowy water. A thick black smoke was issuing from a chimney of some factory that Europeans had built not far from Anatolon-Hissar. There they made some unguent which Leila did not know of, but which must contain some

valuable qualities, for the natives were very busy packing and sending it off. The immense old house had lately been burnt down in a great fire through the carelessness of the Giaour workmen, who on the Sundays and Mondays strolled about the country, leaving a disagreeable odour of wine behind them.

Alas, the peace-loving Turks, who were accustomed in the evening to put on their loose white garments and calmly enjoy the narguile, and the sweetness of *kief* (rest) in their gardens near the Bosphorus, saw with grief the thickness of the black smoke which rose from the factory. Now they could no longer avoid the thousand and one things that came from civilization and stained their existence; and their sad looks lost themselves on the stretch of sea

as the sun went down on the earth. Since the arrival of the European workmen, an arid look had come to the soil. They had cut down the beautiful trees which for a hundred years had thrown their soft shade over the village fountain, and the children and lambs fled at their approach. Leila thought over all this, and her heart sank, and her teaching and mission became a burden to her, for she no longer dared sing her call to the passers-by. Some of the men of the factory were furious at her refusing to speak to them, and others, seeing her beautiful clothes, had tried to catch hold of her to rob her of what she possessed.

Pale with anger, she had spit her disdain at them, and taken refuge with the dervish Saadetdin, who, seeing her

so agitated, had said calmly, "Gently, gently, my daughter, you break the harmony of our rest." Without finding anything evil in her beauty, he did not at all encourage her to take refuge with him, for she forced him to acknowledge the presence of Europeans, whom he obstinately ignored.

He was certainly affected by it, and grew visibly thinner, to the despair of the young *softas* (theological students), who came every morning to kiss his hand and say respectfully, "Glory to God, you are well."

These sudden arrivals of the woman of the hill, when pursued, upset his existence; and the joys of the quiet country were broken by the volubility of the girl when, having escaped from the workmen,

she would rush through his cherry-trees claiming his protection.

The frightened birds and lambs lost their confidence in the dervish; and the students, disturbed in their studies, came out in groups on the threshold of the monastery. One day she became a little too affectionate in her manner to him. Up till that moment he had not wished to trouble himself about her morals, for he had always considered it useless to try and convert women—for with them no one had ever done more than succeed in making them hypocritical—but on this occasion he favoured her with a long and edifying discourse, saying, "It is not that you do not strike me as having all the beauty that Allah has reserved for human beings, but as far as I am concerned I was

willing, up till now, to bring from Stamboul for you pomades and paint necessary for your body, for as all the men of the neighbourhood are at the war, there was no one to do it for you, and I was ready to render you that service and bring you those things to which you seem to attach so great importance. But if you show a want of respect to me, I shall do so no more, for those purchases give me considerable trouble and anxiety, as I never know whether it is dark or pale rouge that suits your complexion best. Besides, I have told you what I think on that subject; to paint your face when as beautiful as you are, is like painting a rose. Your manner is lacking in propriety, and if you continue to try to be more intimate with me, I shall be obliged to turn away

from you, showing you the shame of your mode of life. Do not oblige me, my child, to reveal the evil to you, whilst you are so happy as to be ignorant of its existence. Let each of us stay in harmony with the position God has placed us in. I salute you."

She walked away dumbfounded, having suddenly in her walk that lassitude which weariness of heart sometimes gives more strongly than weariness of body.

The dervish looked after her with a heavy sigh, noting the languor of her walk and the stoop of her shoulders, and he knew that she was suffering from some obscure, unhappy thoughts. He called her back, and nobly held out his hand for her to kiss, giving her some small money.

"See," he said, "with that, when

Mahommed comes back from the war, you can give him something that will please him. You were wise in letting him remain ignorant that you were his mother."

Leila blushed and hung her head, but said quietly: "It is not that there is any harm in being my son—but if he knew it, he would follow me, and he was born to learn how to exterminate the enemies of the Sultan."

"I know, I know that you love him; go, my child, your soul is a beautiful one—remain always as you are, a good mother. And now, should you judge it wise to sing your call to those who pass by on hills that are further off, I will give you a lamb to take with you."

CHAPTER XXIII

For a long time she awaited the return of Mahommed and the men; whilst at the bottom of her heart there lay always the sweet remembrance of Noureddin, the handsome and powerful general who commanded one of the armies of the Sultan with all the profound science of the Germans, and an eye-glass in his eye.

Towards evening she was seized with a fear of the gathering gloom, and with hasty steps she approached the only shepherd who fed his flocks there. With a large sheepskin on his shoulders, he was

whistling softly with a flute made from a reed. He knew three sad notes, which he always repeated seven times running with a strange sort of rhythm and then paused, beginning the sequence again.

He walked, driving his flock before him from dawn to dusk. In their daily meetings he had hardly ever spoken to Leila. He even seemed a little afraid of her, but occasionally, out of politeness, he asked her the news of the neighbourhood and then walked away.

This evening he came up to her, and without wishing her "good evening," said rather severely, "Now that our lives are troubled by all these strangers, who work here with the help of machines, I think we would do well to take the boat to Stamboul, and from there walk towards Hedjaz, where

at least the earth is unsullied by the touch of Europeans, who destroy our faith and happiness."

Seeing that she did not answer, he tore up a bunch of poppies, which he placed over his ear, under his fez, which was bound with a brilliantly-coloured handkerchief, and added :

" There you will sing your call to those who pass ; since God has created you for that purpose, and I, at a distance from you, will occupy myself in looking after the flocks on the farms."

Leila pulled her veil widely open to see better before her, for her thoughts travelled slowly. Then she asked : " How shall we find the way to Hedjaz ? for we should have to cross deep seas to get there. When I went to Thessaly I followed men

who could read signs along the roads;—but you?"

"Don't worry yourself, my girl; we will take care to take our passage on a Musulman boat, and they have their prows always towards Mecca."

She threw some doubt on this, and he said angrily, "Since when do women interfere with things that do not concern them? Am I not a man, who, according to custom, walks ahead, and you a woman who should follow?"

Then, forgetting politeness, he cried out a string of coarse, disagreeable words, proving that in his wandering, mysterious life, good manners had come too late. Not being a strong man, he became breathless, to the great confusion of Leila, and was obliged to stop before he had finished the period.

She was accustomed, like all her world, to hear the oaths spoken, with anger certainly, but with a rhythm that formed a sort of singing curse. So knowing it by heart, she suddenly took up the broken thread, and with calmness and a certain dignity finished the words that had escaped Topal Munir.

Then they started, she following him, carrying her bundle and shoes in her hand.

On the bridge of Galata those who were passing turned to examine their faces, on which was written the natural anxiety of those who were undertaking a long journey in a country of which they knew nothing. They walked with a certain dignity, with their eyes wide open, and determined not to look as though astonished at anything

they saw; when suddenly a quantity of police arrived on the scene, pushing the crowd back till it stood in a thick mass on either side of the bridge.

A military band playing a march soon came in sight, followed by the heavy sound of cavalry, the troopers in many cases seeming hardly able to hold back their horses. The dull rumbling of the trampling hoofs reached Leila, who viewed the crowd with astonishment. There seemed to be something of the thrilling, yet stifling, oppression of a great funeral in the air; and then slowly there burst upon her sight, with drawn swords, the regiments of Noureddin Pacha, their accoutrements flashing in the sun.

In a moment more she recognised Mahommed, sitting stiffly in his saddle, holding

aloft an immense red flag, which threw a glow of colour on his young, warlike face. Behind him came a group of officers in bright and gold-laden uniforms. In their eyes the fever of fighting still burnt, and forwards they went, apparently pushed by the force of the dense mass of troops behind them. There seemed to be no individual —only a great overwhelming wave of the spirit of war.

With her heart swollen with joy, Leila stood on the tips of her toes, trying to see over the heads of those in front of her.

Then, on a magnificent horse, she saw Noureddin coming towards her with his head well up, and a great look of dignity and calmness on his handsome face. His appearance dwarfed all those

of his officers, who surrounded him, and his impassive face gave him the look of one of those chiefs of Islam whom everyone obeyed.

She felt her whole soul go out to him, and their eyes met.

Weak with joy, and unwilling to ask for help from the shepherd, she went up to a magnificent old man, who was calling the blessings of Allah on the troops that passed. Humbly, yet with dignity, she asked for a little money that would take her back to the hill of Anatolou-Hissar. Then she went to the shepherd and said, "I am going back to Anatolou-Hissar."

He asked her no questions, and received her intimation quietly, holding out his hand for her to kiss, and said, rather meaningly, "The tender and green grass

is already growing on the grave of Éminé-hanem?"

She would not appear as though astonished at his knowing so much, and answered, tranquilly, "You speak the truth, my father."

CHAPTER XXIV

She disembarked at Anatolou - Hissar, nervous at finding herself, alone without her shepherd friend, in the village, where the European workmen followed her with looks full of curiosity.

They shouted all sorts of horrible things to her, before everybody, showing her bits of money that they pulled from their pockets.

Seeing that, the children of the village began to run after her, crying, "She is not ashamed—she is not ashamed—she is the friend of the Giaours."

Then, wild with terror, she began running, clasping her yellow leather shoes to her breast. Every minute she turned her head to see if the workmen from the factory were following, with the children, in their pursuit.

The women of the village, hastily drawing their veils, clustered round the fountain and discussed the scandal. The men, coming out of the *cafés*, stared at the exhausted woman. One child threw stones at her, and all shouted, "Would that Allah would tear out your eyes. Run, and may your green eyes petrify as they look on the Christians to whom you give yourself."

The peaceful old priest came out from his little mosque, with its pointed minaret, and called everyone to order, saying several times, "This girl is a creation of God's; if she exists, it is because He

finds her necessary. Do not interfere with things you do not understand. I am ashamed of you. Return at once to your houses."

Then seeing that the Musulmen obeyed him, he ran after Leila, whom the workmen no longer followed, for she fled so swiftly.

"My child—my child," he cried after her, "it is I, the hodja-effendi. I must speak to you."

She paused in her flight, with wide-open frightened eyes, like a startled fawn.

"My soul," he said, gently and kindly, "the ideas of the village are no longer the same, the morals have not the dignity and bearing of old days. These Europeans who work in the factory have changed everything. You must not come back here. If we had been alone (between ourselves), you

might have passed without our seeming to know that you were here, or that we saw you. But now everything is changed—I am sorry—but I have nothing else to say to you. The Christian missionaries think that by words alone they can call such as you to a regular life. My child, I do not think so. Do your best, and may God, who has created you, bless you. Doubtless some day you will come back to the best side of life."

He felt he was about to give advice unasked, and thought that the interview had lasted long enough. He held out his hand for her to kiss, walking away with great dignity, and shaking slowly his beautiful white turban, which he was very proud of, and entered the mosque with its pointed minaret.

The next day she climbed up and sat on the ruined wall, like a queen on a throne, that her people look up to. Then wrapping herself closely with the silk that floated round her, she lifted her veil, and turned her face to Noureddin, who was approaching.

"I was waiting for you, Pacha," she said, "and I agree to live as you wish; for since this factory has been built here, by the Giaours, it is impossible for me to live as the teaching enjoins. The teaching is that of the earth, and of liberty."

THE END.

GJ170 H5

WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON, LTD., PRINTERS, PLYMOUTH

THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 000 051 648 4